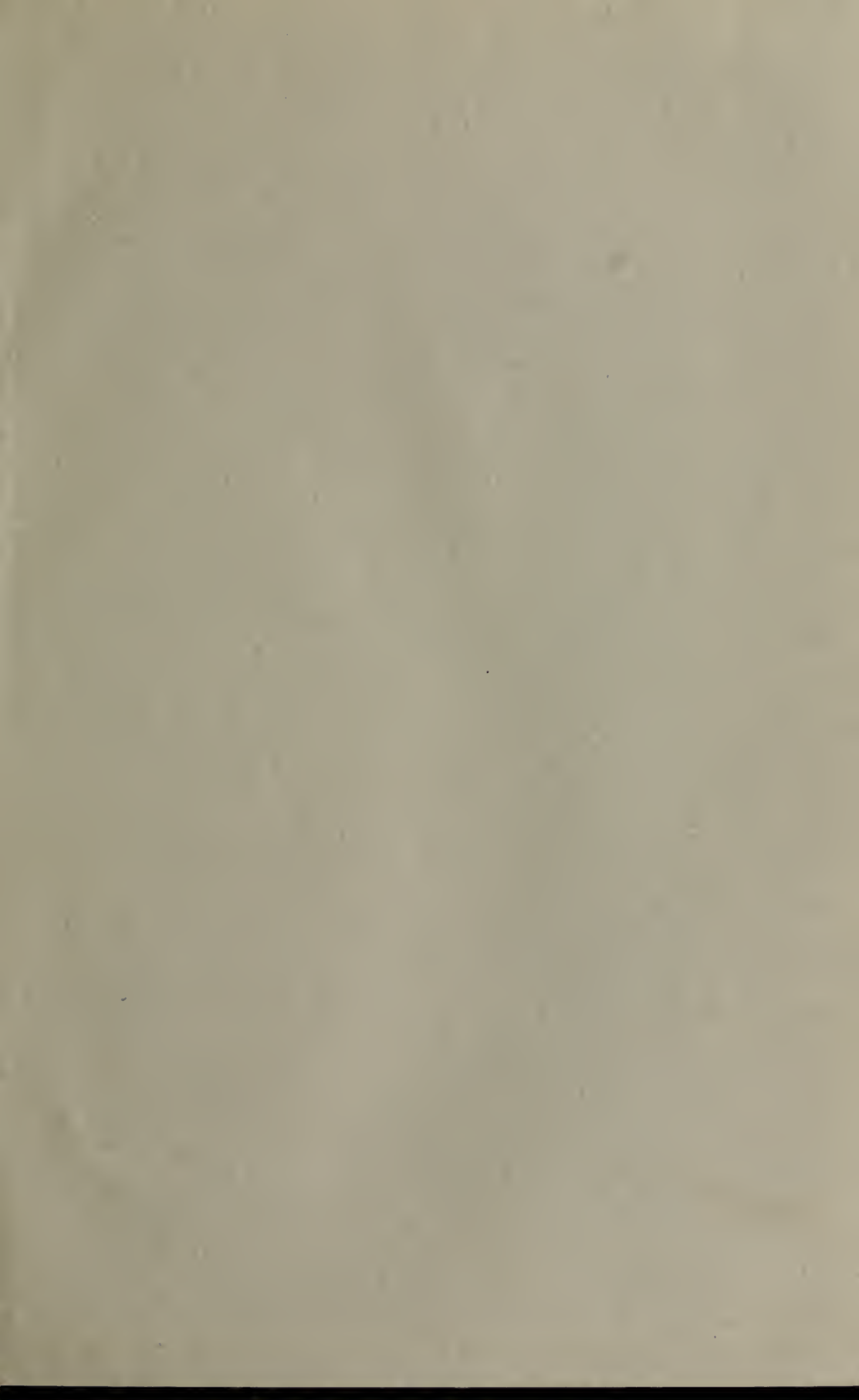






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*The Forest of Arden*







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Dinant, Showing Old Castle and Cathedral



The FOREST  
OF  
ARDEN

With SOME of its  
LEGENDS

(of Castle-Knight and Maid  
of the Winding Rivers Meuse-  
the Semois-the Ourthe-the Lesse-  
and their peaceful Village dotted  
Valleys -  
Wherein 'tis good to wander)

Written and  
Pictured by  
George Wharton Edwards

W H E





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# The Forest of Arden

George Wharton Edwards

*Author of "Holland of To-day," etc.*



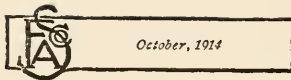
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DC 611  
A676 E3

To  
*My Beloved Lady Anne*



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# *Prologue*







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Rosalind. In an Old Monastery Garden



## Prologue

"Arden," said Lady Anne over her shoulder, with a backward glance at the narrator, "why, isn't that in England?—Oh, do come and look at this little green dog-cart, laden with brass cans—Quick—There it goes around the corner—Isn't this little town of Courtrai the most delightful of all? The flowered vine-grown tower opposite is the quaintest I've yet seen. Do let's stop here."

"But, listen," said the narrator. "Just listen to this. It is not long—just a few words. Arden is not, that is, the *real* Arden, is not in England. It is here in Belgium within a couple of hours' journey by rail. Do come in from the window for a moment and let me read you something of what I've found out. I'll begin in the middle." So Lady Anne amiably seated herself on the wicker *chaise longue* in the small, clean, bright salon of the well-kept inn at Courtrai, and the narrator settled himself comfortably with his back to the seductive market place visible through the large window, and read as follows:

"For the Ardennes is comparatively an unknown country, and is likely to remain so—so far as the more

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

wealthy tourist is concerned—for excepting Spa, there are no luxurious hotels or gay towns to spend money in. But the walking traveller who delights in beautiful country, and who does not object to a humble, though clean, inn at the end of his day's journey, will find the Ardennes a mine of unvisited loveliness,"—"Yes, but,—" broke in Lady Anne. The narrator held up his hand and continued, "and as he wanders along its green valleys between ranges of lofty hills, or climbs its strangely shaped rocky heights which seem to turn abruptly from one another as the sparkling river flowing at their feet takes one of its sudden turns, he will find at every eight or ten miles distance some quaint village or town nestling under the shelter of the rocks, and offering a good supper and bed, and picturesqueness galore."

"Yes, but——" broke in Lady Anne.

"Throughout the Ardennes there are trout and *écrevisses* from the rivers, ham from the wild boar, and plenty of good light beer is included in the bill of fare, free of charge. The beds are invariably clean and good; the people hospitable, frank and willing. The Jesuit Berthollet, writing in 1742, gives a very true picture of the Ardennes of to-day. "There is, perhaps, no more humane people, and in spite of a rusticity common to all country people, and even to those who cultivate the finest provinces of France, the Ardennais may pride themselves on their sincerity, their good faith, their kindness and friendly qualities.

## PROLOGUE

They are good servants of God and the Church—they think well of every one.’ ”

“Yes, but why not stop where we are?” said Lady Anne, her glance wavering to the sunlit square dominated by the lovely vine-clad tower with its shining gilt escutcheons over the deep-shadowed doorway. “Here, we are so comfortable, and I’m so tired of the railway trains.”

“Listen,” urged the narrator with an admonishing finger held high, “you take a map of the country and a pencil. You can draw a line through its whole breadth which will divide it into two distinct parts. Below this line you will have the tract known as Gutland, or Bon Pays; above it, the Oesling, which is a slice of the great region known as the Ardennes. Now this Ardennes is not merely a big spread of forest. It is more than that.—m—m—let’s see—listen to this—‘The ancient faith is here kept alive in its most charmingly pagan forms. The folk are as other peasants, worldly as Bretons every whit, but less priggish, because they do not have sentimental tourists reminding them that they are picturesque, and putting them into wan pictures and washy novels. Yet equally strange old religious customs, of great antiquity, are legion; pilgrimages, kermesses, healing springs and performing statues link every hamlet with a hoary past.’

“Yes, but,” said Lady Anne, “I don’t care for



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

'hoary pasts' now—I'm tired, and I want to stop here in this dear little town."

" 'In presence of some of these archaisms one can scarcely realise the century. Folk lore bristles with wild tales of haunt and pixie, of gnome and sylph and wizard; men seem never to have forgotten the old gods, conjuring up in half-awed and half-regretful talk the times when St. Pirmin or St. Eligius disenchanted the woods and streams and laid the spells of "faërie" with the cross. The country has its familiar saints, recurring in the churches with a deeply characteristic fidelity. It returned, ages since, its representatives to the heavenly parliament, and reposes every confidence in them. There is St. Donatus, St. Hubert with his hind, the golden cross between its antlers'—m—m. Listen, please," urged the narrator, for Lady Anne's gaze was once more wandering to the sunlit square, where a white-capped peasant was loudly calling out the quality and price of the flowers in her cart. " 'Shakespeare here placed Rosalind, the melancholy Jaques, and the others in the play of *As You Like It*, in the Forest of Arden, which extends through the Ardennes.'—Now are you not interested? Would it not be jolly to explore this forest?"

"Yes," agreed Lady Anne, at last. "I think it would be."

"Here, then," said the narrator, handing a few sheets of closely written paper to her, "read that. I

## PROLOGUE

copied that out of an old book yesterday. It will take only a few moments to read. It has the flavour of the forest and the olden time, I think."

The Lady Anne curled up in the *chaise longue*, then read what he had written. It must have been of considerable potency, for the next day they began the exploration.





*The Way into the  
Ardennes*



## *The Way into the Ardennes*

*I*N my mind lingers a sentence which so aptly describes the entrance to the Forest of Arden, that I must quote it: "This forest way is lacking in all prescience of wide prospect. It is a valley way, so lowly and so leisured, asking of no grandiose picturesqueness, but only a tender and very simple appreciation." Lady Anne and the writer found this way, and the manner of it shall all be set down herein. This is no sort of guide book to the Forest of Arden. Indeed, it meanders along at times apparently without purpose. It tells of no statistics, nor railway fares, nor has it any logical sequence. It is simply an account of the wanderings of two happy companions through a little-known land of legend, of knights and fair ladies, and their loves and fate. This is all. There are towns and circumstances, happenings that have nothing signal in them, but which, because of recollection of charm, do endear them to the wanderers. The poet says: "Love's self hath no thrill so dearly delicate as the memory of the way by which we were going when we found Love." And so here we enter the Forest of

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

Arden at evening, in a lumbering diligence drawn by four horses, and driven by a handsome, swaggering peasant, a noisy fellow, and evidently a *beau gal-lant* of the region.

Of course, we could have come by the railway, or by the long, low river steamer up the Meuse from Namur, but this, we decided, would be too unromantic. The road winds along by the river side, occasionally dodging behind a hill, but always promising a view or vista, and keeping well its promise. Sometimes grey or brown crags wall the stream in most severe alignment, and on this evening the sky above them is one of pearl, for the sun is lowering. Ruined shapes of stone show here and there on hill tops above the dark glossy green of the trees, then vanish. Long ranges of mountain unfold to the left, and here and there thick willows overbend the stream, where lock-tenders sit peacefully with their families before the cabin doorways. We pass Millet-like figures on the road laden with huge bundles of brushwood on their bent shoulders. Invariably they pause and salute us as we pass. The tinkle of the angelus bells in an unseen tower sounds from somewhere beyond among the thick verdure. We pause here on the river bank and our driver says that his road lies in another direction, and that here we must take the ferry boat for the opposite shore. He points out a post among the pendant willow branches, and a sign board which tells us to "Ring the bell." In re-



A Chapel in the Ardennes



## THE WAY INTO THE ARDENNES

sponse a boat appears in the stream, propelled by the figure of a woman, who sways to the oars. With a cheery good-bye, the driver mounts the creaking diligence, whose only passengers we had been, and a turn in the road where thick, dark-green willows grew, hid the lumbering yellow vehicle from our view.

The ferry woman rowed us safely over the river for fifty centimes each, and at the small roadside inn or *estaminet*,\* as they call them here, we got each a cup of milk and a thick slice of black bread with unsalted butter. In the afterglow nature seemed asleep, and all reflected in the river, and along its banks we walked to the darkening town of Dinant nestling on either bank below the dim grey citadel, overtopped by the spire of the church. The young peasant who carried our luggage conducted us to the best inn, and handed us over to the landlord, who seemed to us to be all that a landlord should be. A bright fire on the hearth; the bubbling sound from a hanging pot, and a sweet, fragrant smell of stewing meat, herbs and vegetables, greeted us.

In all this there is nothing pretentious, only the delicate sort of spell which impresses one at certain villages, an incommunicable charm after all. But in looking back one associates this quaint journey, the ferry and the arrival at the inn, with that indescribable, perhaps fleeting, sense of comfort which is given out by certain little earth corners, of

(\*From the Spanish *Estamento*.)

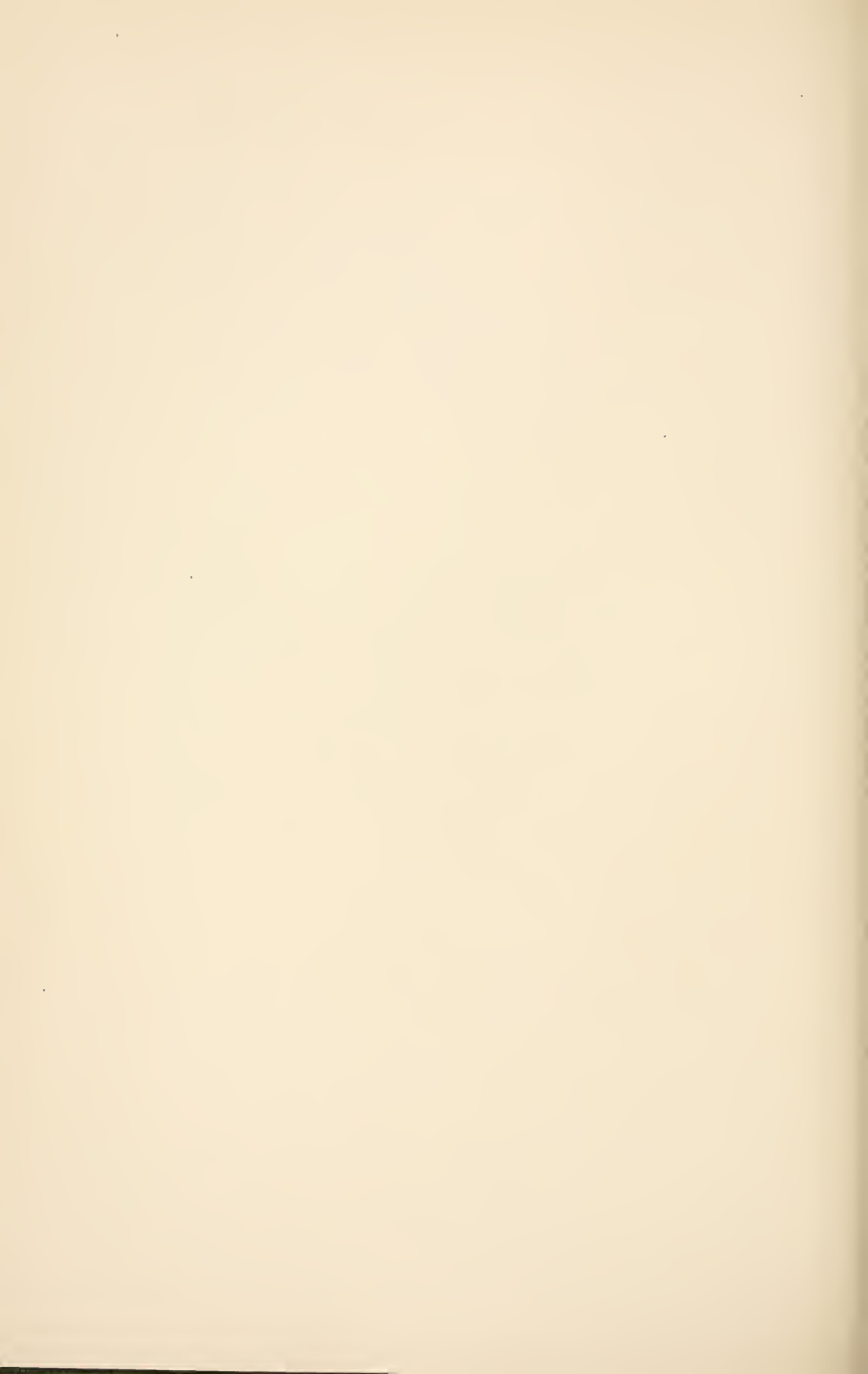


## *THE FOREST OF ARDEN*

which none should question the conditions, nor seek to analyse them, but accept them all like epicures, with gratitude and appreciation, and thus and so began our first night at the gateway of the Forest of Arden.



*The "Fête-Dieu" and  
the First Adventure*



## The "Fête-Dieu" and the First Adventure

WHEN we fared forth into the streets of Dinant the morning after our arrival, we found a town decked with pine branches and flowers, and a happy, busy multitude thronging the streets. The pavement and even the rough stones of the roadway were bestrewn with pine boughs and freshly mown long grass, and here and there were bright bunches of stock and clematis, until our feet fairly sank into the fragrant green carpet and crushed out perfume as we walked. It seemed as though one thought dominated, one effect was uppermost in the minds of the townspeople, and never was a town so given over to its festival as this quaint Ardennes town divided by the charming winding Meuse. All ordinary occupations seemed forgotten, and these usually quiet, reserved people were now bent upon making this day the chief event of the year, for it is the great Fête-Dieu, the feast of the year. From all about, within a radius of miles, the farm wagons laden with clean-looking, well-dressed peasants had been coming since sunrise. Tall, silk, rough-napped hats adorned the

## *THE FOREST OF ARDEN*

heads of the men, and gold chains, crosses and strings of bright coral beads decked the necks of girls and women, young and old. Occasionally fine lace caps with pendant flaps were noted on the heads of the older women, and rarely on the young ones, for, alas, the latter now affect what they consider to be stylish bonnets with feathers, and the effect is not picturesque. Men and women carried huge bunches of honeysuckle or bright geraniums, and these touches of vivid color in the throngs of dark-robed people were delightful. It was not really gay, for Dinant is so grey a town that no gaiety can quite overcome the neutral tone of it all. But the people were resolved that this, the greatest day in all the year, must be memorable for its decorations, as well as for its piety, and thus the whole town, from the church with its tall bulbous spire shining against the citadel crowning the hill above, was changed from a practical trading community into a beautiful altar, as beautiful as only a people with inborn taste for beauty could make it. So from dawn the work had been going on. Such scrubbing of pavement, such washing and splashing of windows! Water there was aplenty and the women and girls used it. At one side was a sort of open-air chapel standing before an old grey stone house of most venerable aspect, with a number of young women presided over by a nun busily putting the final touches to a most artistic construction of white linen sheets all decked with gar-



Young Girls Praying in a Roadside Chapel



## THE "FÊTE-DIEU"

lands and festoons of bright flowers, and ropes of dark green fir, amid which the plaster statue of the Virgin shone, against a background of tall lilies. Here a small garden of sod had been laid, and one of the young women was busily watering the grass to keep it fresh and green, while a boy strewed yellow sand along the walk that wound about the altar. Strips of carpet covered the steps, and tall candlesticks of bright brass, and banners, crucifix, and tall thin tapers crowded the steps, while above the sun shone in a cloudless sky, and the crowds passed, or paused to admire and to exchange badinage. There were pictures for the artist on every side. Groups of young girls, clad in spotless robes of white, flitted hither and thither, their floating white veils showing against the grey background of arched doorways and recesses. Priests clad in scarlet passed hurriedly through the sombrely clad throngs of peasants.

We followed the crowd into a side street near the river, where the houses were old, grey, weather-beaten and mossy. The upper stories projected curiously over archways, and here we came upon a group of nunlike women, who were decking a tall altar with wreaths, while others were putting in place tall gilt candelabra and crosses. The faces of these women beneath their snowy coifs were fresh and their ruddy cheeks and sparkling eyes made them seem almost beautiful.

Mounting one of the steps at the arched entrance



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

of a house, I peered in a flower-decked window, and saw two very old women seated at a table playing cards, with an earthen pitcher between them. The room was dim, but out of the dimness I could make out the great stone fireplace, wherein a pot simmered, and curled up on the hearth was a large yellow cat. On the wall hung gleaming brass, catching the light here and there, and I made out in the shadows the shape of a huge bed with heavy pillows and hanging draperies. The two old crones were deeply engrossed in the game, and as they moved their heads I saw Rembrandt-like faces, deeply wrinkled, peering from their frilled caps, against the dim warm background. So engrossed were they in the game that they gave no heed to the faces of the watchers against the window panes. And so we left them.

Overhead the great grey citadel walls massed their vastness against the sky. Down a small side street we passed, the Lady Anne and the writer, and wandering without definite purpose, other than the command of the moment, came upon a high rusted iron fence in which a half open gate invited us. Turning in, we found at the end of a gravel walk, among the blooming vines and shrubbery, a flight of stone steps which attracted us. These steps led upwards against the rock, and we mounted them hand in hand, not knowing just where they led. We soon found that they led to the citadel above, and, although they



## *THE FIRST ADVENTURE*

seemed somewhat shaky, and the mortar seemed loose here and there, it did not occur to us that there was any particular danger in the ascent. Soon, however, and before we had gone more than halfway up, I became aware that the stones gave crazily to our weight, and that the stone parapet at the side farthest from the rock wall had fallen away in places. We were now about halfway up the ascent, and from here we could overlook the town and winding river. We stood still, enjoying the view, while the bells in the grey tower of the old church at our left were ringing the quarter hour. When these ceased shouts were heard from above, and looking up I saw at an opening where the steps led a number of men and women who were gesticulating and calling out something to us. I could not make out what they said, but I waved my hand to them and moved on, taking the arm of Lady Anne. A stone dislodged by my foot fell away and went bounding and clattering down—down, until, with a great curve, it vanished in the trees at the foot of the cliff. Then we went on up—up the steep ascent, which by this time had become arduous and tiresome. Whenever we stopped for breath the cries and shouts from the people above would recommence, at which I at first waved my hand in response. Then, all at once, the end of a coil of new rope rolled down the steps to us and one of the men at the opening above motioned vehemently for me to seize it and put it about my

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

waist. Then, and only then, did I begin to realise that we were in any danger. I obeyed, tying it first about Lady Anne, beneath her arms, then under my own, moving slowly upward, now hugging the face of the cliff, for the parapet here had fallen away, leaving not more than four feet of stone steps whereon we stood. I placed Lady Anne before me, and here we leaned against the cliff to rest for a moment. The man above had taken in the slack of the rope and now held it taut without pulling upon it. As I looked up he waved to me and called out "Douce-ment, doucement, m'sieur, prenez garde! Montez doucement j'vous en prie!" He was not more than twenty feet above us now, and behind him I could see the heads of men and women blocking the space. Where we stood we were on a level with the bulbous spire top of the church, around which a large flock of ravens were flying, dashing in and out of the bell-chamber below. I could plainly see the rows upon rows of bells hanging on the frames; some of them were quite green with age and verdigris, and they varied in size from, it seemed to me, about the size of a teacup on the upper row to huge ones dimly seen in the shadows below. The Lady Anne had not spoken since I tied the rope about her, but well I knew that she realised our danger and would be game to the end, whatever it was. Now we had to step over a deep gap in the stairway, and this we both managed somewhat dizzily. All at once the

## THE FIRST ADVENTURE

rope was pulled taut and we were both fairly dragged up the remaining steps, which were here very steep. In another instant we were both hauled violently into a narrow passage, at the top of which was a door, and here strong arms seized us and shouts went up from the multitude of men and women, some of the latter falling on their knees with hands held up in prayer for our rescue, while others bore away Lady Anne. Amid all the excitement and the exclamations of the people, I began to understand that this stairway had not been used for more than twenty years;—that it had been condemned as unsafe, and that the lock upon the gate below in the garden must have rotted away, for it had been locked for years, and there was a sign, too, there, forbidding its use, but I had not seen it. The adventure quite unnerved us for the day, and we had some difficulty in getting away from our kind rescuers, who overwhelmed us with attentions. We returned to the town along the top of the cliff, through the palace gardens by the winding roadway, escorted by a phalanx of children which rapidly augmented. By some sort of wireless, word had gone down to the town of our plight and rescue, for we came face to face with the Monsignor, who met us with outstretched hands of congratulation and was most solicitous about the Lady Anne, who had by this time quite recovered her spirits.



*Yève-Celles*



## Vève-Celles

THE sun slanted, warmly beating upon the plastered vine-clad wall of the house of the old priest, with whom we, the Lady Anne and the present chronicler, sat on his green slat bench in his garden. It was known far and wide that Father Paul of Vève knew all that pertained to the history of the forest, and, while he disdained all hints regarding Rosalind, or the good (or bad, as you will) Robin Hood, dismissing their names with a wave of his hand, yet mention of the four sons of Aymon, or Baldwin, *bras-de-fer*, would never fail to arouse his interest and loosen his tongue to some tale of strife or love wherein lay great profit to the listener. The Lady Anne hung upon his words, with parted lips and eager eyes, while as for—but listen to his words. “Plectruda? Aye, monsieur, the wife of Pepin d’Héristal. And there before you on the hill stands Vève-Celles, the castle, with the curse upon it, the blasting curse of the Hunchback.” And so on to great length, for this worthy man had a fluency of words and of detail; but of this I shall spare you, reader, and begin this tale where you would have me.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

. . . "And Pepin, being in love, rode on through the blackness of the night, on his way to Plectruda, and with him went his abbot for his company, as well as to remit his sins, of which he had many. Of Pepin's looks, I shall say shortly that he was a tall young man, of high colour and calm of face, straight-nosed, grey-eyed, spare of flesh, lithe, swift in movement, and at once bold, eager, sleek and cold, a very blend of feline and canine. Furtive he was and seeming crouched ever for a spring upon whoever merited it. Not savage, yet primed for it. Not cruel, yet quick to take offence, and watchful, too. Of blemishes he had many. Of weaknesses at least two, too much trusted he to his face, too much despised he every one else as fools. At first sight of him he moved you to admire him. Great stature, high colour, red beard jutting to a point, shut mouth, and cold narrowed eyes, movements soft, quick, and so you see Pepin as he was. Women loved him, but not so men, for his full trust gave he never to any man. As to women, I say not, as you shall judge.

"That dark night when Pepin rode through the Forest of Arden to her, Nature hid moon and stars, and he heard no night bird cry, nor did thicket rustle from passing of affrighted animal. There was naught but darkness along the gutted road and through deep fosses, but ahead shone seemingly to Pepin a dim glow as of a fire. At last the worn cavalcade reached the ford, passed through the dark pines, and





The Castle. Vève-Celles



## VÈVE-CELLES

cantered up the wide pass to the lighted tower of her father's stronghold. The light Pepin had seen was that of Plectruda's tower, where armed men stood with guttering torches, awaiting the coming of Pepin to his mating. She stood in the wide doorway, all white and gold against the dark, and seemed to loom taller than she could have been. She awaited him thus, her hands crossed upon her bosom, over her braids. The abbot has described her for us in the chronicle, and thus he saith:

“‘All white and gold was she,—her face was creamy, without red, save in the lips, where ’twas a dark red, like unto the province cherry, and there was a wilful curve of the upper lip that boded ill for whoever crossed her desires. Of the colour of raw silk was her hair, which was long and plaited in two plaits, in which were twined silken strands, brought about her neck scarflike and joined upon her bosom. Her dress was of clinging white silk gartered at the waist by a wide golden belt, and on her small feet were slippers of *vair*.\* He halted before he slipped from his horse, and, all rough and travel-stained, he bent his clanking mail-clad knee on the stones before her, and kissed the slender hands she gave him, then he rose up and, hand in hand, they passed in.’ Of all that happened in the banquet hall, the great table well laden, my lords and ladies seated and standing, doing homage to Pepin and Plectruda, the abbot is

\**Fur.*

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

voluminous and verbose, but I shall pass this over. They were abroad early in the Forest of Arden. It had dawned fair. From the sky the heavy grey wrack of cloud had been swept away, leaving it pure and blue; and there they wandered amid the great trees on the flower-spangled and mossy ground. . . . She went with him, cold as ice, her eyes lowered, but that was her way. Cold outwardly, inside glowing with fire. Now it happened that on the edge of the forest there dwelt a certain hunchback (*bossu*) who was of ill repute, yet who had not come under the law. A small demesne had he, and it was said that he hoarded money. Vassal was he to Plectruda's father. This hunchback of late had taken to brave velvets and silken clothes, and had dared to lift his eyes to those of Plectruda, who had smiled kindly upon him, yet pityingly for his uncomely hunch. This smile was quite enough to influence the hunchback, who thenceforth waylaid her, and one night he did call upon the evil one himself to aid him. The disease of his mind fed fat upon the disease of his body, and from the gluttony did foul resolve rear its serpent head. This hunchback had no God but lust. Night and day Plectruda's image tantalised him, her lovely face floated in scarlet clouds before his disordered brain. Damned torment was this, the reminder that another who was fair and noble would have her. His impotence came over him like unto a surging flood. It made the

## VÈVE-CELLES

veins stand out upon his forehead. Naught save the beast's resource was his who had the beast's desire without his ability. And this night he raged up and down his hall with the tragic quest of an animal making blind his bloodshot eyes. Then did he call upon the evil one, saying, 'My immortal soul for one kiss from the lips of Plectruda!' And lo! There before him stood the evil one himself. 'Sign here,' said he, producing a parchment and pen, and when this was done, 'Thou shalt have thy kiss this very day. Go thou to the forest edge and there shalt thou find the fair Plectruda, but mark ye, the rest is not for such as you,' and with a leer he vanished. Sure enough (saith the chronicle), there at the forest edge was the fair Plectruda, with her wedded lord, and when she saw the hunchback approach she stopped and held up her hand pityingly, motioning him to draw nigh. 'What wouldst thou with such?' asked Pepin, but she looked gently upon the hunchback, kneeling at her feet, and said, 'Should I not in my great joy now be kind to such, my lord?' And now see how the evil one worketh. So fair and lovely did she seem to the hunchback that a very fury inflamed him to insanity. He leaped to his feet and, before she could turn away, he had seized her and drawn down her face to his own and had kissed her upon the lips. Pepin drew his sword and ran him through the body, and there the hunchback fell. There upon the grass, running

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

with his blood, the wretch called anew upon the evil one and cursed Pepin and all that was his, his house and eke his descendants forever. And the thunder rolled, and the rain fell, and the soul of the hunchback, whom Satan did then and there claim for his own, passed down to Hell."

. . . And here the good Father Paul crossed himself piously, and then took a huge pinch of snuff. Of course, after this we must go and see the Château of Vève-Celles, which now occupies the site of the castle which Pepin d'Héristal built in the year 685, whereon the curse of the hunchback fell heavily, and where misfortune ever followed upon those who dwelt within its radius. The present castle dates from the fifteenth century, and belongs to the family of Beaufort. The small village of La Vève is huddled around the base of the cliff. It is said that the name of Celles is derived from a cell occupied by a monk or hermit named Hadelin, who lived there in the seventh century. At any rate, there is a tomb inscribed to St. Hadelin in a small chapel of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, near the church. The church itself is a very remarkable structure, built in a remote period, with a double crypt, much of which is now under water. Its interior is disfigured by whitewash, and it contains tombs enough to occupy for a long time any one who is interested in them.

The château or castle is entered by an arched





A Bashful Model





## VÈVE-CELLES

passage between two gateway towers, giving upon a great courtyard with five sides, and here all is overgrown with nettles and bushes. Over a flight of broken steps the brambles form a screen, hiding the rusty iron grill, and there are ruined doorways on all sides.

It is only a few miles distant from Dinant-sur-Meuse, and may be reached by following the picturesque Lesse from its parting with the Meuse at Anseremme, by a winding road which crosses the river not less than eight times in its short course.

. . . "Square, massive castle, covered with round black-capped towers, frowning down from the hill it crowns."

Across the side in the courtyard is a curious gallery of two stages upheld in the center by an iron pillar, and there is a ruined sort of parapet of decayed half timber and brickwork after the Norman fashion. The roof is very steep and chimney-stacked, and there are rows of quaint small dormer windows dominated by a slender capped steeple which perhaps in former times contained a bell.

The interior presents a terrible picture of ruin and disorder. We were now in what had been the library, for the bare floor was strewn with large books, many rent from their covers, and in every state of decay and destruction. Some of the folios were, or had been, well bound in vellum, and these were mildewed or torn in a manner that suggested deliberate

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

action on the part of some one who had endeavoured to destroy them. Handfuls of pages had seemingly been grasped at once in the effort to tear them out, but the paper was so stout and fine and the binding so honest that the work of these old master printers resisted the attempt to obliterate them. I picked up one of the books, a very large folio. The frontispiece, a fine wood engraving of a Greek galleon surrounded with a border of tritons and fabulous marine animals and fish, was torn in half. The title-page was in red and black, and proclaimed that this was an early edition of the "*Right and Dominion of the Sea, imprinted at Antwerp by Christopher Plantin*" (date obliterated by mildew). The book was in Latin, on linen paper, and I longed to own it. All about were piles and heaps of these old books and torn bindings left as worthless by the last owner of the castle when he abandoned it forever. The hangings of the wall hung in ragged damp strips, where the rain had leaked in from the floors above. The windows were gone from several frames, and in one of them hung the sodden rag of what had once been a magnificent deep rose silk portière. Under it was an open-lidded leather-bound case, several feet long, containing a disordered mass of letters, manuscript and soggy parchment deeds, with huge waxen seals and signatures attached. There were also piles of what seemed to be legal documents, bound together with faded tape, all mouldy and damp and heaped

## VÈVE-CELLES

up together in confusion, as if the box had been hastily ransacked or the contents thrust into it under the necessity of great haste.

Three very old Spanish armchairs of oak, leather-seated and studded with brass nails, now green with verdigris, were in this room, one on either side of the empty fireplace, and the other lying upon its back in the midst of the litter. The ceiling was of wooden panels, showing traces of colour and gilding. From the centre hung a broken chandelier, its lustres mainly gone, and some of them broken under foot. We searched this ruined château thoroughly, and the kindly old priest piloted us from room to room, pointing out to us the really savage destruction visible all about. He led the way to the chapel, a very small one, occupying a larger apartment at the top of the creaking, shaky staircase. The altar still remains, and upon it is a tall black crucifix before which the old priest paused and bent his knee. From this apartment opened a number of bedrooms, all furnished with broken chairs, tables, bureaux, dismantled beds, and tattered canopies. Rags and dirt were everywhere, and over all a certain nameless impression of the curse of the hunchback of long ago.

One of the bedrooms had been most richly furnished, for still on the streaked walls hung some tatters of Flemish tapestry. Above the hearth a large, half-obliterated portrait hung sideways from the broken frame. The painting was upon a fine oaken

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

panel, and was plainly the work of a master hand, but the dampness and mould had penetrated behind the ground upon which the pigment had been laid, so that it had "buckled" up (artists will understand the term), and large patches had separated and fallen away, one of which included what had been the face of the portrait. Closer examination proved, however, that this had been largely due to intention, for I now saw two slashes from a knife or sword thrust, which had penetrated the oak panel in the very centre of what had been the face. This fact I pointed out to the old priest, who simply pursed up his mouth, raised his heavy eyebrows and nodded significantly.

"Ever ruin and destruction, misfortune and death come to those who inhabit this castle, monsieur!

"It is as I have told you. From the date of the hunchback's curse upon Pepin, and all that was his. This is the fate of Vève-Celles."

For days thereafter we went over our experiences at the ruined château, longing to go again to explore it more fully, yet we never did. The hours we spent there left their impression upon us. The fête going on in the village did not suffice to remove the feeling of depression, although the spectacle of pretty, young, gaily dressed peasant girls, dancing with their swains in the square to the music of a barrel organ, was pleasant and picturesque, and the dinner, to which we invited the good priest, was alto-

## *VÈVE-CELLES*

gether a good one. We seated him at the table head, and did him all the honours we could think of. He had quite a manner, the good father, and I am sure that he must have an interesting story of his own to relate, could we but have induced him to tell it.

The next morning we returned to Dinant in the "Diligence" during a downpour of rain.



*The Picture of Dinant*





## *The Picture of Dinant*

*A*T first a world of dark undulating rocky land, masked in verdure of shining green herbage and heather, high bordered with lines of darker fir. Detail of picture is hid by largeness, and as one descends the tableau contracts and the horizon closes in until all is dominated by a grey old ruin above, and the homely, warm glint of the roofs frames the picture. The town, seemingly shy of its prominence, pushes forward stretches of grassy slopes of warm gold and emerald green to catch the sun. All around are swelling hills, shadow-veiled. As we still wind downwards, perspective changes mirage-like, each step altering the view of mossy thatch and climbing honeysuckle; then the long valley stretch, and the level winding river; from whence comes the somnolent pat-pat of the washerwomen's soapy wooden paddles on the sedgy bank, a fisherman here and there nodding half awake with drooping pole, and over all the bulbous grey spire of the old church overtopped by the frowning fortress castle. Reverie and sketch-book hold one here in happy thrall. until the splashes of golden

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

light have vanished from the valley and overhead a canopy of rose-shot lilac emblazons the sinking of the sun. Deep and dark is the stream below, and the tinkle of bells on the nimble goats, following the barefoot boys down the slopes, sounds strangely muffled. A feeling of loneliness bids one seek the village, where warm yellow lights in the houses portend the supper gatherings, and in the small *estaminet* luscious cutlets and a certain brand of Moselle astonishingly cheap, together with the charm of exchanging notes with a chance traveller, raise content to the level of optimism.



Old House Fronts, Dinant



*Loilvache*



## Poilvache

THEY say he is already in the Forest of Arden, and many merry men with him, and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England, and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the Golden World.”—(*As you Like It.*)

“Is it true,” I asked the rough, whiskered, blue-bloused driver of the swaying cart as we sped along the high road beyond Dinant on the way to Poilvache, “Is it true that Robin Hood once haunted these woods?”

“Robeen Ooda,” he replied, regarding me suspiciously,—“but no, m’sieur, I have lived here boy and man for eight and thirty years, and never yet have I heard the name, ‘Anglais, peut-être.’ We have had them here, and of the manners pleasant, too. At the inn, m’sieur may ask, and Madame Marie shall answer, she knows,—and if she says no, then no it is.

“But,” he added, as an after-thought, “it may be that I do not pronounce the name rightly.—Ah! these English names! I cannot say them. Was this Meester Ooda tall? Did he have the hair of red?

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

Then, if so, I think I recall him. He was artist painter, and he went to live below Poilvache. I can show m'sieur from the hill. Yes," he continued, nodding his head, "I can show m'sieur where he lived at Poilvache." And then, after an interval of silence, he repeated, "Yes, I can show m'sieur.—Surely." At the very foot of the rock upon which the old castle stands is the tiny toylike village of Houx, and here we were convoyed along the street by a dozen or so of children, and some goats, which jumped and capered about us comically, to the great disgust of our driver, who had tethered his horse and cart to the door of a house whose occupants had welcomed him noisily. An intelligent fellow was this driver, in spite of his error about Robin Hood, which we let him hold in peace. While we toiled up the path, he insisted upon relating the story of the Four Sons of Aymon. I must say, too, that he told it very well, albeit with certain additions and embellishments which did not tend to improve the legend. The account by the Macquoids is entirely accurate, and we trusted implicitly in it. Even the children and the goats had met us. Here was the church with its "square tower and stumpy spire and the modern château of the count," which was closed. The glen is indeed picturesque, to use that very much abused term for the nonce, and the huts beside the noisy little stream are certainly hovels. We saw faces of women at the dim windows regarding us stealthily,





Old Wind Mill on the Meuse



## POILVACHE

but they did not come forth, although one of the goats ran into the open doorway of the last hut, reminding us of Brittany. The ascent is certainly most toilsome in the bright sunshine, and the Lady Anne was quite out of breath when we gained the summit, where the views were superb of hills, valleys, and the winding Meuse, and the castle of Crèvecœur opposite. Here we sat on the shoulder of the lofty hill, we three, the Lady Anne, the present chronicler, and the erudite driver. As for the children and the goats, they were far below us, but we could hear their shrill calls occasionally, although they were hidden by the tall dark pine trees.

Before the ruined tower of the Castle of Poilvache is a large depression which must have been the moat. It is now carpeted with a sward of green velvet. The ruins are tremendous in size and extent, and there are excavations and work going on under the auspices of the present proprietor. From the tall, bare windows inside, the view over the Meuse is certainly wonderful. The ivy-clad wall of rock beneath is perpendicular to the river, hundreds of feet below. On the right opposite is Moulins, and masked by the deep wooded hills is that ancient rival of Poilvache, the stronghold of Montaigle. To the left are Bouvignes and Crèvecœur, each on its rocky promontory. The river winds its silvery way in gentle curves here and there, vanishing for a space behind tree-covered crags. We sat ourselves down outside in a

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

mossy space between the roots of a huge oak tree. Here the breeze blew cool, sighing amid the branches overhead. A sense of well-being overcame us. With our backs comfortably supported by the rough trunk of the giant oak, we mused. Conversation became monosyllabic. I must have dozed, for I was startled by a touch upon my arm. A man was bending over me. I jumped to my feet, startled, putting my hand to my pocket. "Nay, sir," said the man, "be not alarmed. I mean you no harm. I came upon you by chance as I was passing, and, seeing you asleep, strangely clad and evidently a stranger to these parts, needs must awake you for converse, at the risk of seeming rudeness. I mean not rudeness, sir," said he, with a graceful bow and a sweep of his hand. While he spoke I had time to regard him. He was tall, spare, with a thin face, bearded to a point at the chin, the nose aquiline and clean cut, the eyes steel grey, alternately widening and narrowing curiously. His gaze was steady and forceful, and he gesticulated much as he spoke. His figure was most strangely clad in what seemed to be coarse brownish or snuff-coloured burlap, a sort of blouse, gathered at the waist by a leathern strap, clasped by a huge metal buckle. In this belt or strap was stuck a long knife in a sheath, with a buck-horn handle. The skirt of the blouse reached nigh to his knees, and his legs were clad in leather leggings, much wrinkled at the knees and ankles. All this I saw as he spoke. And

## POILVACHE

now, waiting for my answer, he watched me narrowly, his head a little to one side, quizzically, it seemed to me. Then, as I was about to say something, I know not what, he beat his thigh with his open hand, which he then held out to me. "My hand, sir, in token that I wish ye no harm. Nought that ye have about ye is in danger from me or mine. I bid ye welcome to the wood," and he waved again the hand that I in vain essayed to touch. "Ho, art a poet, then?" catching sight of my sketch-book on the grass beside where I had reclined against the roots of the tree. Stooping, he picked it up, opening the leaves at a sketch of the ruined tower behind us.

"By the mark, a limner!" he ejaculated, turning the leaves rapidly and with interest.

"Canst do me, lad, in brave line? I have some silver in my sack to pay thee. Hark ye to the sound," and he shook the small bag hanging from a cord to his belt.

"Name then thy price, and, by the mark, I'll pay thee down what'er thou say'st, e'en tho' it be all my sack contains. How wouldst have me stand? Perchance I might handle well the bow an' have at yon hawk above. Ho, there! My bow." Out of the shadows of the dark trees behind us came a youth clad like the man before me, holding out a long tasselled bow and a quiver bag containing long arrows. Then he turned and swiftly walked away without a word.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

"Likest thou this stand, or mayhap this is better," he said, suiting the action to the word, and, affixing an arrow, he drew the supple bow gracefully and, pointing it upwards at the circling hawks, let it twang musically. The hawk turned upwards quickly. There was convulsive movement and then it shot swiftly downwards, leaving a feather or two eddying in the light breeze.

"Ho, then, limner! Canst match that? Or methinks thou couldst not have two arts, and cert's limning is a pretty one, albeit smacking of the hearth-stone rather than the forest. But forgive me, I meant no discourtesy by my speech. An' thou thinkst no ill of what I said, do then, I pray ye, limn me thus as I stand with bow bravely held, string to the thumb, and flèche to the head." And thus he stood before me eager, with his grey eyes widening and narrowing, as I have said. I strove to speak, but no sound came from my lips. I tried again and again, troubled at my failure, to no avail. Then, all at once, I seemed to slip down—down—and there I was reclining against the great tree trunk, the Lady Anne a short distance away, standing with our driver, who was pointing out something in the distance. I looked about me. There was no one else in sight. The man in brown was not there. I fancied I heard the winding of a horn afar. Scrambling to my feet, I approached them, and the Lady Anne turned smilingly, saying, "The boat from Namur is coming down



## POILVACHE

the river. See the ripples in the stream. How like silver they shine in the dark shadows reflected from the cliffs. Oh! how beautiful it all is!" I could not help asking her if she saw the tall man in brown, although I now realised that such favours are seldom vouchsafed to more than one at a time in the Forest of Arden. And then she questioned me until I had told her all, but, to my great relief, she did not laugh. . . . Guarded by the frowning but now harmless and dismantled citadel, Dinant nestling below on the right and left banks of the river Meuse presents a picture of great charm. And one would hardly believe that the mild-mannered townsfolk of to-day are the descendants of the quarrelsome and braggart people who gave Philippe le Bon, Duke of Burgundy, and his son, afterwards known as Charles the Bold, so much trouble. Anciently the Burgers of Dinant and those of Bouvignes were bitter rivals in everything. The latter erected the stronghold of Crèvecœur as a menace, and to this the Burgers of Dinant responded by building with despatch the fort of Mont Orgeuil; but no sooner did this reach the ears of the Burgundian Duke than he compelled them at once to demolish it. For twenty-five years then the rivalry waged, until, learning that Liège had defeated the Burgundians, the warriors of Dinant proceeded to Bouvignes, bearing an insulting effigy of the Count of Charolais, the Duke's son, hanging in chains on a gallows. But the news was a

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

mistake. The Burgundians had not met defeat or reverse at the hands of the Liègeois. They had on the contrary been victorious, and were marching along the road to Dinant some thirty thousand strong, afoot and ahorse, led by the now infuriated Charles, who put the Liègeois to rout, pillaged and burned the towns on his way, and captured the hapless knights and warriors of Dinant, whom he threw into the Meuse and drowned after torturing them. The women, children and the priests he spared, however, sending them in a body to Liège. No one knows whatever became of them. As for Dinant, he left it in ruins, and one hundred years later the French occupied it and plundered the unfortunate townsmen again. They must have had extraordinary courage and industry, for to-day there is no evidence of want in this smiling, happy little town. But Dinant, once so proud of her manufactures of brass and copper, known as *Dinanderies*, has now nothing to offer but her quiet charm and her noble hills and streams.

Two miles below the town, on the highroad to Anseremme, is found the great Roche-à-Bayard, over one hundred and twenty-five feet high, isolated from the cliff by a road some dozen feet wide. Legend ascribes the origin of its name to Bayard, the magic steed of the Four Sons of Aymon. Among all the legends of the region, none has perhaps been better preserved than this.\*

\*See page 121.



## POILVACHE

The present village of Montford, above the quarries, is largely built of the stones from the castle. Mine host at the inn, finding that I have an attentive and appreciative ear, is at some pains to relate the customs of the region. One is concerned with a sort of yearly parade reminiscent of the time when the people of the forest were heathens. On this occasion the streets are bordered with fir trees, which temporarily convert the town into the semblance of a forest. For days before the women and boys gather trees and branches so that the poorest cabin may have its tree. At prominent corners and places triumphal arches are erected, and at these the procession halts to permit the acting of some scene typical of the town's history.

One is that of the knight who loses his way in the forest. To him the Virgin appears, miraculously, and leads him safely to the hut of a woodman, who shelters him.

The great scene, however, and the one which rouses the greatest enthusiasm among these simple people, is that of the giant who once dwelt in the forest, holding the whole region in a state of fear. He appears clad in shining papier-mâché armor, astride the trunk of an enormous tree drawn by oxen. He is called by various names. Many of these semi-religious processions have the characteristics of pilgrimages. One is the anniversary of Notre Dame de Montaigne, and takes place on the road from Roche-

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

fort to Foy Notre Dame near Dinant every seven years, and is joined in by nearly the whole population. It appears that Foy gained its reputation during a terrible outbreak of the plague in the sixteenth century, when remarkable cures were attested to by those who made the pilgrimage to the shrine. For a time, however, it languished, but was revived by a count of Rochefort at a recurrence of the plague. The procession takes place on Whit Monday, and for weeks before the farmers have been drilled to form a cavalcade headed by the count himself on a white horse, most nobly caparisoned. The start is made at break of day, before sunrise, and all the long day the cavalcade winds its way up and down hills, stopping at various points for refreshment, which, of course, is a most important part of the ceremony. When they enter the town of Dinant, the old historic cannon is borrowed from the citadel for the occasion, and is fired once in the centre of the square, to the great terror and excitement of the children.

But the really great pilgrimage of Dinant is that of St. Hubert, which is much more of a religious ceremony than the one last described. St. Hubert is the one saint appealed to in the case of hydrophobia, and thus a large number of those who participate are (or imagine they are) suffering from this dread disease. The procession wends its way to the spot in the forest where the scoffing knight of the emperor Charlemagne, wandering among the trees,

## POILVACHE

met the fabled stag with the golden cross upraised between his spreading antlers, and here a chapel has been built and called the *conversarie*, or the place of conversion. The knight gave his name afterward to that part of the forest, and his tomb is still shown in the crypt of the church which has several times been erected over it. During the French Revolution, the good Father Paul says, the Bishop of Namur purchased it for the sum of £1,500, and thus saved it from destruction, and now it remains peacefully embowered in the leafy shades of the Forest of Arden.



*Through the Forest to  
St. Hubert*



## *Through the Forest to St. Hubert*

*T*HE storm in which we departed from Dinant soon spent itself, and, although Florenville attracted us, we decided to go on to Poix, whose creature comforts are manifold. Here we alighted in a blaze of sunshine, clear skies, and the sweet odour of flowers still wet with the rain. It was harvest time, and each poor village furnished its quota of labourers for the reaping. We had met and passed them on the roadway, men and women trudging along in bands. As a rule, they were silent, even morose. What did their poor lives contain to make them otherwise? Grinding toil, privations and sorrows. Sometimes whole villages are hired by the large farm owners, and these workers arrive on certain days with their utensils and bivouac in the great barns. In the early dawn, long before the sun rises, they start for the fields. During the overpowering heat of August it is well-nigh impossible to work in the middle of the day, consequently the larger part of the labour is done in the cool morning hours. It is most interesting to watch the harvesters form a line across the field, each standing by

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

a ridge or furrow and pushing straight before him. The leader of the gang, or *ordon*, goes ahead, while the others follow; while behind a second overseer urges on the stragglers and weaklings and makes sure that the work is well done. Wheat is reaped with the sickle, or is laid upon the ground with a scythe. As the wheat falls it is disposed in swaths or in sheaves.

When the weather is cool or cloudy this rough, hard work of harvesting is accomplished without much suffering, but when the sun darts its blinding rays from an implacable blue sky it is then that these poor peasants of the forest villages, both men and women, literally water the sheaves with their sweat. The crude, white glare dazzles them; the heat burns the nape of their necks and scorches their bent backs. All around them the air is flaming; under their feet the very earth is seemingly on fire, and the monotonous sound of the grasshoppers in the stubble rings in their ears with maddening reiteration. Towards noon they fairly reel under the goading cries of the overseers, and then, after hastily despatching the poor food brought to them from the farmhouse, they stretch their burnt, aching bodies in the meagre shade of some hedge or against the unreaped grain, falling into exhausted sleep. After this brief siesta the work is again taken up and carried on until nightfall. Then they wend a weary way to the farmhouse, where in a shed they find a supper of pork and cabbage





Stag in the Forest



## THROUGH THE FOREST

with a thin sour beer for drink, and afterwards a bundle of straw in the barn for a bed. I am told that on many farms the men and women used to huddle together promiscuously in these common dormitories, but the authorities forbade this and something in the way of better care has resulted. This severe labour continues throughout the countryside until the crops have all been reaped. Then they collect the last sheaves in flower-trimmed wagons, into which the labourers climb, singing the folk songs. This is called the Festival of the Sheaves, and is as old as the hills.

We happened upon just such a festival. The whole valley was lighted by the lambent rays of the setting sun, in which the figures of the peasants shone, their faces dull scarlet against the yellow and golden brown grain. Across the meadow beneath the shade of a screen of trees preparations for the fête-day supper were going on. All at once a hurdy-gurdy ground out some raucous sounds, and the laden wagons, ox-drawn, began to move. Behind the last yoke of slow-moving oxen was fastened the king sheaf, tied with garlands of flowers and surmounted by a cross made of the ears of wheat and green branches. Near the oxen, beside the driver with his long goad, was the hurdy-gurdy player, grinding out his favourite gavotte. Then followed the whole troop of harvesters, the old farmers leading, and after them the reapers with their sickles over their shoulders.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

Then came the gatherers and binders, walking in fours, and lastly the boys and very young girls, bare-legged and ragged, yet merry with the thoughts of the delights to come. When this cavalcade reached the barn yard all at once the music ceased, and the senior farmers, four old men, took down the flower-trimmed sheaf and carried it solemnly to the spot where the proprietor of the farm stood masterfully regarding them.

"Master and the present company," said the elder, removing his heavy straw hat, "here is the sheaf. The good God has granted it. We have reaped it, and we now present it to you with the prayer and wish that the present year may bring you happiness and plenty to your house." A jug was brought. The proprietor filled a cup with wine, lifted it high above his head, then, scattering a few drops over the sheaf and bowing, said: "To your health, my men and women, and also to the sheaf!" Then he gravely and slowly drained the cup.

There was something touching—a strange simplicity—not wanting in grandeur, like an ancient pagan rite, in the consecration of this golden wheat by the peasants who had sown and harvested it in the sweat of their brow, in this libation made in the rays of the setting sun in honour of the fruitful year's work, and we watched it with full appreciation. In the now denuded fields, through the sharp stubble, come the gleaners. Bowed over, with eager, watch-

## *THE FESTIVAL OF THE SHEAVES*

ful eyes, they, the very poor, gather up the scattered ears fallen from the plenteous sheaves. It is a privilege granted everywhere, and the practice dates back to Biblical times.

However, here this gleaning is subject to strict, if unwritten, rules, which the poor are pledged to observe. It can take place only in daylight and under the eyes of the overseer. In this way the carrying off of the full sheaves is prevented; and as soon as dusk sets in the rural guard in a loud voice announces that the gleaning is over. Then in the cool of evening the gleaners depart, while the heavy-laden wagons roll towards the waiting workers at the huge barnyard.

Poix is only a trifle over four miles from Saint Hubert, the town where we determined to stop until we had exhausted all it had to give. With the legend of the saint we were familiar, thanks to our good friend, Father Paul, the priest, who had taken us to Vève-Celles. He was a veritable mine of ancient lore, and we were loth to leave him. To his care and thoughtfulness we owed many attentions from those throughout the forest to whom he had written and commended us.

One of the very largest in all the country is this forest of Saint Hubert.

Reaching from Liège southwards to the frontier of France stretches this great forest, dotted with cities and villages, and cut by deep wooded valleys through



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

which charming rivers wind. There is still a stretch between Marche and La Roche which is unbroken wildwood, and herein lies the veritable forest (so it is said) of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. It is still something of a *terra incognita*, and is thus most attractive. Saint Hubert, too, is an interesting figure of a swash-buckling, profane, careless knight of the profligate court of Pepin, who thought but little of his soul, spent his days in hunting wild game, and his nights in the pursuit of certain more gentle sports, if the chronicle saith truly, to the great scandal of the clergy and the church.

Every schoolboy knows the story of how he came upon the haloed stag in the forest, bearing between its branching antlers the golden crucifix, and such was the character and recklessness of this braggart that even then his slow wits refused to credit the divine miracle. It is said that he rode furiously up the bank to give the noble creature the fatal thrust with his lance, and it was only when the mystic voice warned him of his sinful life that he dismounted and knelt before the apparition, vowing to reform and enter a monastery. This, indeed, he did, and finally, as we know, became Bishop of Tongres, to the manifest astonishment of the whole court, and the impetuous Pepin himself, whose comments have been so amusingly chronicled by the seneschal of the castle:

"This Hubert, certes, did look well upon horse or all in armour clad. I say not so when afoot was he,



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A Maid of the Forest





## *SAINT HUBERT*

for marry his upper part was his best. The manly part it was. All pockmarked was he, this knight of Pepin's court, with scanty red hair in disorder and seamed face to match, ever shining in oil; a square jaw somewhat awry, the neck and shoulders of an ox; with gnarled, gross, hairy hands at the end of arms quite out of proper measure; a cruel mouth and hooked nose. Yet in him now one saw something like fear for the first time. Fear, and in the eyes of Hubert! Aye, and now hath he come to Pepin to relate and tell of his conversion.

"Angry was Pepin, angry that he had lost a knight of known temper, and what was this kneeling before him? Was this Hubert, the bloody, the loud-mouthed swashbuckler; Hubert light o' love; the gallant scaler of ladders by moonlight to beflowered bowers of delight? Thus began the play. Pepin was in a picking mood for a quarrel; little stock took he in this babe's tale of the wondrous stag. 'Twas seemingly a trick to get away from the court. Was the man drunk or crazy? Enter a monastery, forsooth! Pepin sat in his huge chair against the arras and gnawed his nails as his red-lidded eyes rolled hither and yon over his court assembled, affecting not to see Hubert, kneeling at his feet. Let him kneel on, and Hubert did kneel, thus becoming stiff as a lance rest. Then Pepin's humour changed. His talk was of things not tolerated by the Church. The snap of his jaws betrayed his humour, and the

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

knights became uneasy. His language, indeed, degraded him, and, indeed, he fairly wallowed in his lewd talk, so that e'en my gorge arose at it. Old Richard, at the very elbow of Pepin, frowned and muttered in his beard so loudly that some heard him. 'God's wounds,' said he, 'that e'er knight's ears be forced to receive such mouthings!' Pepin heard him plainly, and I could see Hubert heard it by the upward glance of his small eyes.

"John, Knight of Merlon, whispered in Pepin's ear, and he replied with a bellow of fury that sounded through the chamber. 'Ha! Is't so? Then let him kneel. 'Twill toughen him for his later task with the monks. Every man to his trade!'

"Then up rose Hubert with great dignity. I had not thought it of him. Had he seized blade and drove it at his Lord Pepin, I had not greater marvelled at the change in him. Then stepped he forwards to the chair. Up at him did Pepin glare, and showed his molars. 'And now, thou Hubert,' he said, 'have thy brains gone silly, man? Dost dare return me thy sword thus?'

"'Dare is not the word to cast at Hubert, Lord! But I am a changed man. The cell henceforth for me.' Before Pepin could form his words of heat and savage retort, he continued, 'Lord, few words and to the point are best. You seek to force my ill humour, but I'll not reply thus.—As vassal and knight, I came before you to-day for my farewell. I

## SAINT HUBERT

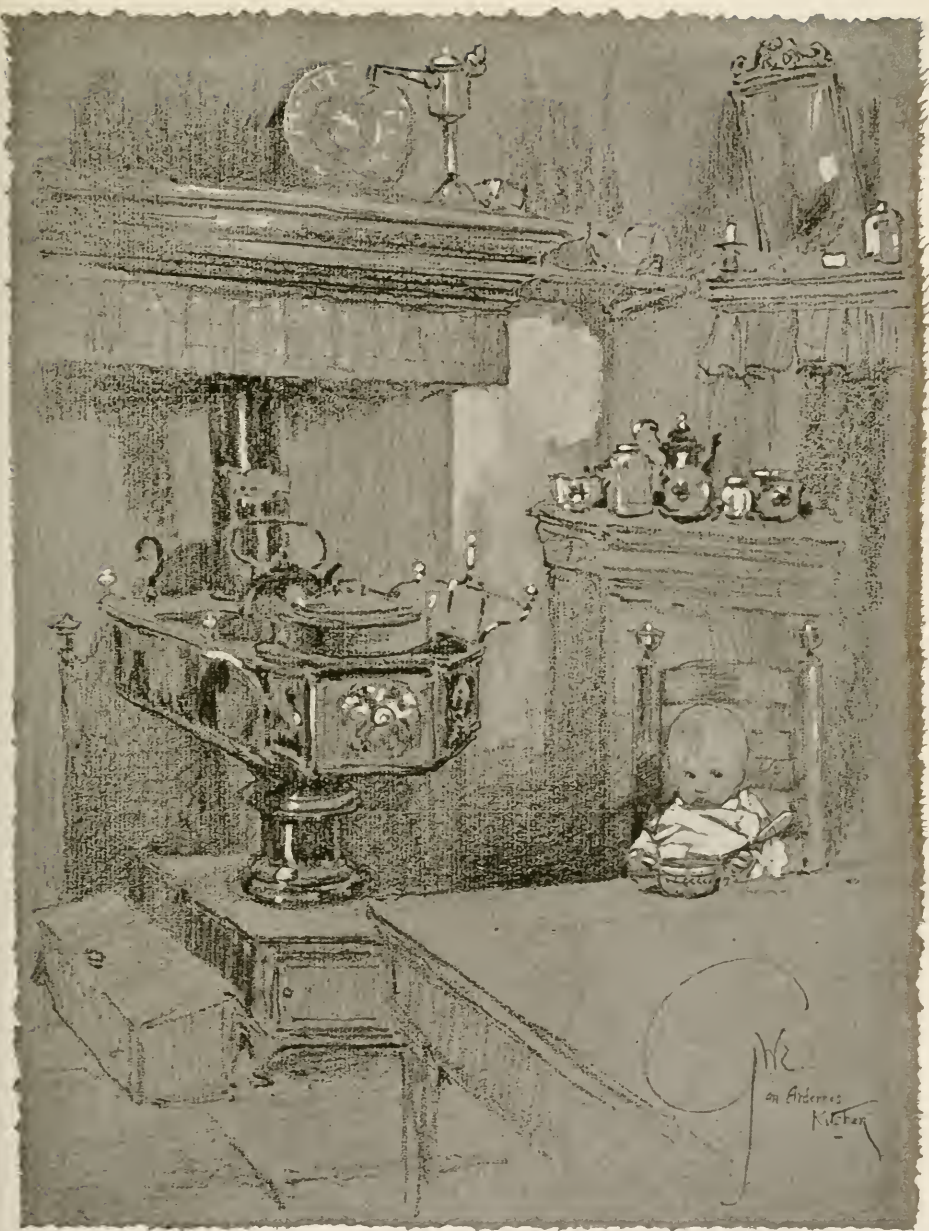
have knelt before you as token of my fealty, and now I depart upon God's work,' and he turned aside and strode from the chamber. I never saw him again."

The way from Poix to the shrine of Saint Hubert is bordered by high rocks and deep clefts. Soon this comes to an end and we are in an open country, the road shaded by sycamore and ash trees, with the little river Lomme laughing and gurgling on the right of us, through fair green meadows "all pied with daisies." Here and there is a small waterfall which must contain trout. Soon over the tree tops we can see the square dark tower of the abbey, which proves upon closer inspection to be an impressive structure for so small a place as this little town. Appetite got the best of us and we went at once to the clean-looking and inviting "hotel," where a warm and kindly welcome from a placid-faced landlord with mutton-chop whiskers of luxuriance gave promise of the hospitality of the "Luxembourg." (We have noted that throughout the Ardennes hotel proprietors with "mutton chop" hirsutes invariably furnish most superior accommodations to the discriminating traveller.) Saint Hubert has his mark upon everything hereabouts. Even the ham, that unrivalled *Jambon des Ardennes*, is ornamented by the chef with antlers formed of cloves and a cross of yellow carrot slices. The butter is stamped with the stag and cross, and there are souvenirs galore to be had in the town. At the table d'hôte the company was quite a merry

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

one, and finding that we were Americans and not English, against whom they seemed prejudiced, they all craned their necks the better to see what we looked like. All this quite frankly, which lent a pleasurable zest to the conversation which ensued. All vied in giving us information intended to enhance the enjoyment of our sojourn at the hotel, as well as to inform us of all that pertained to Saint Hubert, which is little enough. We were much more interested in the subject of wild boars, which are plentiful here, and we greatly desired to see a boar hunt, which the proprietor promised us, provided we stopped long enough in the town. The notary, who sat at the head of the table, became very agreeable, and, as he was a well-read man, we quite enjoyed a tilt or two with him regarding the question of England's right to the location of "Arden" in Warwickshire. In order to bring him out, we pretended to agree that England was right, and it was only at the end of the meal that, amid laughter and much good feeling, we acknowledged that we had been purposely misleading him. Thereafter he was untiring in his efforts for our entertainment. Indeed, we marvelled often at the kindness of the people throughout the forest region, as well as the small charges at the inns, which are, in the main, quite comfortable. Obeying the call of the bell ringing for vespers, we joined some of the people crossing the square to the church. Between the towers was a large statue of Saint Hu-





An Ardennes Kitchen



## AT THE "LUXEMBOURG"

bert kneeling, and inside were some good modern bas-reliefs by Geefs, and choir stalls well carved and interesting. The shrine was worth examining, and was given by the late King. Beyond this there was little to interest one in the town, where the memory of the saint is thus kept green after the long period of time stretching back into the dim past, one thousand two hundred years and more ago. The country round about was wild and craggy, and the trees were very satisfying. One pictures the forest as being like the canvases of Rousseau, and, indeed, this is true. Here was the wildwood carpeted with bracken and fern, the dense wood being almost boundless, stretching away to the Baude wood. "More than one thousand five hundred hectares," said the notary. Spenser called this the "Famous Ardeyna," and ancient lore is full of allusions to it. Here magnificent beeches lined each side of the roadway, and cool vistas tempted one to enter the dim aisles of the forest. There was a dreamy greenish glow in those glades, like the artificial light one sees on the stage, so unreal did it seem. Here, indeed, one might in fancy come upon the figure of the picturesque Jaques trying "to suck melancholy out of a song," and what wonder if we lingered under the green-wood trees until the day was spent? Occasionally there was a rustle in the thickets and a fleeting glimpse of a rabbit. But if any wild boars were near us we did not discover them.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

They hunt the truffle here with the boar, and we are asked to go to-morrow, if it raineth not, with the notary to see it done. He pointed out to us the beech mast between the roots of the trees. Of this the boar is very fond, and when he finds a lot of it he is apt to make a great fuss over the discovery. The notary showed us a collection of boar spears at the inn. We fancied that these were perhaps the very model of that carried by Rosalind.

On our way along the road the notary, who talked entertainingly, if incessantly, pointed out a rather ordinary looking house as the *Conversarie*, which, he said, occupied the very spot where Saint Hubert saw the holy stag, and was converted. It was dark when the village was reached. The air was cool and misty, and the country was becoming more and more beautiful and varied. To the right and left were dark empurpled hills, deep gorges, and cleftlike valleys, through which the road wound, and all at once ahead of us we descried the tall black ruin of a castle.

"Well," said Lady Anne, as we alighted at the sign of the "Golden Stag," "Robin Hood I may grant you, but you will admit that we've seen nothing of Rosalind as yet."



*Something of the Old  
Life in the Forest*



## *Something of the Old Life in the Forest*

THE dwellers in Arden's woods and dales were not without social privileges, albeit the chronicles would lead one to suppose that in those early times nothing but tyranny and hopelessness was the lot of the serf. European peasant society was undoubtedly an agglomeration of more or less contented, ignorant, insanitary beings, all natural enemies, and enjoying a life of mutual and cordial detestation. The serf's case was not by any means hopeless. A certain liberty, and even the lower honours of chivalry, were at his discretion, within his reach. Did he in any way distinguish himself in feats of arms, there was always promise of a place of honour in the ranks, even a chance of ennoblement. The social relations of seigneur and serf were based upon a principle of mutual advantage. Under right of might the serf could place himself with the knight in battle or for the protection of the castle, in a compact of ward and work. The serf desired safety for himself and family from attack and rapine. The baron wanted food, domestic service, soldiers to defend his halls and fol-

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

low him upon his raids against his neighbours or into battle. The vassal gave both heart and hand to his master in return for the shelter of his stronghold. Thus the castle upon the hillside with its frowning towers was not a menace to the lowly cottages at the base of the cliffs, but rather their protection against the common enemy. No seigneur could afford to browbeat or oppress his vassals, or he would be left at the mercy of the neighbouring robber barons. Dangling before the eyes of the vassal were always the rewards of prowess. Should he perchance save the life of his seigneur or his lady, or be the brave survivor of a battle with an enemy, he might by chance win the hand of the daughter of his lord, and thus become not only a knight but the founder of a new line of noble blood. In short, his lot was by no means hopeless. The chronicles and documents of the time which are preserved at Louvain and Bruges, showing the feudal relation, are surprisingly clear and copious. They may be characterised as windows which let in the light upon the social conditions of the times. In German, Latin and French, they show that the serf, although holding his little property under the feoffage of his suzerain, yet really owned it, and enjoyed the privilege of bequeathing it to his heirs, under certain conditions, of course. The lord was enjoined and agreed to support him and allow him meat and drink of a quality expressly stipulated in the bond. The meat consisted mainly



The Ambleve. Quarreux



## SOMETHING OF THE OLD LIFE

of pork, and the wine must have no water in it. We think of the past ages as dark and the customs of the people as quaint. They cursed, believed in witches and charms, in dragons and miracles; they drank and swore and worshipped the saints; they lived, loved and died, and worms consumed them, yet methinks they possessed one great virtue—*they did not talk Art!*

The ancient towers of La Roche stand upon the very pinnacle, the highest level, of the Ardennes plateau, and the small town below on the banks of the swiftly flowing river Ourthe has a freshness and uniqueness that set it apart from any other in the forest. Standing on the suspension bridge, one gets the best impression of the town, crowned by the blackened ruins of the castle, perched upon a huge rock above it, or rather clinging to the side of it, for most of the ruin except the towers is so placed.

Now the creature comforts of La Roche are of a certain importance, and consequently we were susceptible to the flavour of dinner which was being prepared in the hotel at which we alighted. The anticipations we formed were in no way disappointed. Dinner was served after the custom of these parts at twelve o'clock midday, and the entrance to the dining-room was through a most delightful kitchen, where madame, monsieur the chef in a white apron and tall white cap, and the girls,



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

all neatly clad, were drawn up to receive the patrons, in formal yet smiling array. It was a sort of fête day in the little town, and there were some rather noisy *commis-voyageurs* from Liège, who sat at a side table and consumed prodigious quantities of beer and wine; but the gaiety was of a harmless, pleasant character to which it were ungracious to object. The fish was fresh from the river at hand, and the ham, boiled with honey and wine, was so delectable that when the soufflé was served there seemed nowhere to put it. The table d'hôte fairly groaned with the good things to eat. The price of daily board and lodging at this inn is four francs, "*tout compris*," with all the beer you care to drink. There was always a plenty to eat of eggs, chicken, fish and salad, with a roast of meat invariably at dinner. Bear in mind, I do not say that this is usual throughout the Ardennes, but it is not unusual in some parts. Before essaying the ruin of the castle we presented our letter of introduction to the mayor, from the amiable notary of St. Hubert, who had done so much for our comfort and entertainment. Monsieur, the Mayor of La Roche, proved to be a very old man, a scholar and true antiquary, whose days were spent in study among his books and records. All that he knew regarding the legends of the castle he related to us most willingly, and with great skill of narration. Here is the story:



*The Legend of  
La Roche*



## *The Legend of La Roche*

*THE* ancient castle of La Roche is situated on the borders of the forest. It is now merely a heap of ruins; for when the last of its ancient possessors was consigned to the tomb, with his sword and shield resting upon his coffin, the home of his fathers passed rapidly to desolation and decay. There was none left to take a pride in the memorials of former grandeur, or to feel the affection with which the remembrance of our childhood ever inspires the heart for the place where it has been spent. Guest and servitor have vanished, the cattle of a stranger graze the turf that covers the old courtyard, and the tufted fern and flowery grass wave on the dismantled walls where the banner of the noble barons once rustled in the summer breeze. The castle stands upon an eminence commanding a rather extensive view, which is bounded by the forest, stretching the line of its dark foliage like a storm cloud along the horizon. The turf is burnt and slippery down the slope of the little hill, which has not a tree to shade it from the unmitigated fervour of the sun; but a narrow track of fresher green, where some

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

animals which make their covert in the ruins have been accustomed to pass, leads down the descent to a small but thickly planted grove, standing like a military picket in advance of the forest. Here, beneath the leafy canopy of the spreading boughs, rises a little fountain, sparkling in every sunbeam that finds its way through the tangled foliage, and dyes its lucid waters with the hues of morning and of eve. The wild and gloomy recesses of the forest have for ages been feared and famed as the resort of wood demons, fiends, witches, werewolves, and other unearthly beings of supernatural powers and malicious propensities, mysterious in their origin, evil in their nature, and miserable in their doom. Though they were supposed to possess powers and knowledge far surpassing the limits of mortal capacities, resorting to them for aid and counsel was denounced by the Church as accursed, and, according to tradition, was always punished by speedy and retributive justice—their rash ally soon becoming their victim by means of the same unholy aid or counsel he had received from them. Among the many fables to which this ancient local superstition has given rise the secluded fountain just mentioned, situated so near the borders of the dreaded forest, has been assigned as the haunt of a nixe, or water fairy, distinguished from the rest of her capricious sisters by her sad union with mortality. A legend current among the neighbouring peasantry connects the mer-



Ruins of La Roche Château and Castle



## THE LEGEND OF LA ROCHE

maiden's fountain with the fate of the last possessor.

The fame of the barons had been principally attained by their exploits in the field. They were the foremost and most valued of the nobles who accompanied their feudal sovereign to his wars, and were alternately engaged in reckless aggressions, or busy in opposing them, diverting the brief intervals of peace with the mimic warfare of the chase;—the restless spirit of adventure which distinguished this family had raised them to a high degree of fame and consideration among the stormy spirits of those unquiet times. The banners of the conquered waved in the victor's hall, and a hundred suits of armour glittered to the torchlight when he held his festal banquets with his brethren in arms.

The father of Henry, the last baron, died, as most of his predecessors had done, on the field of battle. But when his body was conveyed to its resting place, a gloom more sullen than grief hung upon the brows of the mourners; their eyes flashed too bright for tears, rage and shame were in their hearts, for the banner of their chief was left in the hands of the foe when the brave but aged Baron had fallen in the hour of defeat. To his son the warriors looked for vengeance, but it seemed in vain. The studies and pursuits of the young Baron Henry differed widely from those which had been the pride and glory of his gallant ancestors. Gifted with all the advantages of person, rank and wealth which might have ren-



## *THE FOREST OF ARDEN*

dered him an object of envy and admiration to the brave and beautiful of the imperial cities, he scorned the smiles which fortune lavished upon him. He took no pleasure in the exercises and amusements in which the youth of that age loved to excel; but, having learned the art of reading, then a most rare accomplishment, from a travelling monk who had visited the castle, he devoted himself to the new pursuit with all the ardour of youthful curiosity. He was much too proud to be accessible to vanity; and, delighted with his new and solitary acquisition, he surrendered without a sigh the empty distinctions coveted by others. As the light of knowledge dawned upon his mind he learned to despise, not to pity, the dark ignorance in which the generality of his fellow men still rested; and, far from entertaining a wish to share in their praises, he looked with scorn upon those veteran warriors of whose skill in arms he heard so much, but who, he knew, were scarcely able to spell the motto on their shields. He turned over the pages of history, laughing at the vain toils of the conqueror, and the futile machinations of the statesman; for he saw the triumphs and trophies of the former floating by like glittering bubbles down the stream of time, and dissolving successively into empty air; and the subtle web that enwrapt the projects of the schemer, broken amid the stormy gusts of fate, as lightly as the breeze sweeps away the shining gossamer which covers the grass at day-

## THE LEGEND OF LA ROCHE

break. Henry's was not the heart to sympathise with the varied joys and sorrows of human nature; he contemned them all as transient and puerile. He burned to pore upon the wonders of nature—he explored the cause of that which to vulgar minds appeared miraculous—he dived to the fountain of her beauties, and moved like a ruler amid the grandeur of her storms. His ambitious spirit paused not here—it had exalted itself above the common herd of unenlightened and prejudiced minds, and, in despair of finding a kindred spirit among them, it sought to tear away the veil from the invisible world, and acquire a share of knowledge and power beyond the limits assigned to mortality.

The frequent absence of the old Baron had allowed Henry to remain undisturbed in the course of life he had chosen. He grew up to manhood, and had never loosened from its sheath the sword which had been his father's gift on his twelfth birthday; and the old baron went forth to battle again and again, without the arm of a son to aid and defend him. He derived some consolation from the thought that Henry was not his only child—he had one daughter, and from the early death of his wife this young and lovely girl must have been left solitary within the gloomy walls if her brother, like her father, had loved the battle field better than the hearthstone of his native home.

If there was anything that Henry loved,—and

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

truly pride and the selfishness which is the bane of solitude had sadly chilled the noblest affections of his nature—it was his innocent and beautiful sister. It was a relief to his burdened mind when, wearied with the dark study of the human heart, the pride, the malice, and the crimes of men—or with his still more fearful researches into the mysteries of the invisible world—to turn to this pure and gentle creature, who looked up to him with the most affectionate confidence, and he held his knowledge and skill with the pride equalled only by her fondness. She was the dearest, almost the only, link that bound him to the world.

The news of the Baron's death fell heavily upon them both, for dearly had Adela loved her father, and Henry was now necessitated to assume the rank which he despised, and enter upon the publicity he loathed. He followed his parent's remains to the grave. When the priest had concluded the funeral rites, the warriors who had brought back the body of their chief from the fatal field closed around the dead and called upon their new leader to join them in their oaths of vengeance. Adela, who had sunk like a broken flower upon the grave, arose, and with cheeks glowing and eyes flashing through the rain of tears, joined in the demand upon her brother to avenge the honour of their lost father.

Henry looked down and was silent—he raised his eyes, and beheld indignation and scorn in the gaze

## THE LEGEND OF LA ROCHE

of the veterans that surrounded him. Snatching his hand from the grasp of Adela, he rushed from the chapel.

He fled to his own apartment, but solitude had now become bitter to him. Proud to excess, he could not drive away the thoughts that galled his spirit. In vain do we seek to attain that stoical indifference which renders us callous to the world's opinion; often it has been assumed,—no acquirement is in reality more difficult or more rare. We may bear the scorn of one, the ingratitude of one, the enmity of many, but to be despised by *all* is bitterness. And such was Henry's galling reflection; his father's honour was bequeathed to him, his vassals looked to him to lead them on to conquest,—to him, who had scarcely ever unsheathed a sword or bestrode a war horse. The child of the meanest serf was better acquainted with arms than the Baron, heir of a long line of glorious ancestry, and the first who, in the eyes of the whole world, would disgrace their name. The volumes which had taught him the workings of the elements, which opened the mysteries of the invisible world to the eager and desperate student, would not assist him now, though he turned over leaf after leaf almost unconsciously. He rose and leaned from the turret window,—a full moon rolled in cloudless splendour through the sky, where a few pale stars were twinkling;—the grassy hill slept in the silver light, but a gigantic shadow was still spread over the long

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

gloomy expanse of the forest. Henry gazed long and wistfully upon the radiant heavens. "Would I could read my fate in the stars," he cried; "but it is in vain. Long have I toiled, yet the clue to those dark labyrinths is still denied me. Heaven is closed, and the dull selfish mortals now locked in sleep around rest in even darker ignorance than mine. What are we?—the prey of a malicious and relentless destiny, the slaves of a power we can neither comprehend nor resist, involuntary denizens of so fair a world, whose beauty is a mockery of our wretchedness."

He looked with a bitter smile upon the fair scene that lay before him, and his eyes rested on the fatal forest. "Do none but mortals roam upon this globe? Where are the beings that have their dwellings amid the wild woods and desert caves, whose existence is derived from the air or the ocean, to enjoy for a space the brief sway of a power far more extended than that of mortality, to be again dissolved into the essence which supplies the fount of their parent element, and, again united with them, to perish? Men say their gifts are ever evil to mankind—it matters not;—better sink beneath the malice of a fiend than exist the gibe and scorn of this ignorant and brutal herd. The thoughts now warring in my bosom fit me for an alliance with demons. Help me they can—and aid they shall give me."

He hastily opened a large black volume,—which,

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secured with brazen clasps, lay upon a marble pedestal,—brought it to the moonlight, glanced over a few pages, and replaced it.

He then wrapt himself in a mantle and left the apartment, opening a small postern gate of which he alone possessed the key. The Baron passed outward and rapidly descended the hill. He soon arrived at the little grove, but paused an instant ere he entered beneath its leafy shadow. His secret purpose lay like lead upon his heart, for he knew not how suddenly his unuttered wishes might be fulfilled. He paused—he wavered not in his dark resolve, but, collecting his scattered thoughts, braced his nerves to meet the near encounter, and then moved forward as rapidly as the irregular ground and deep shadow would permit. The intricacies of the path required care and attention even in daylight, for it was rough and uneven, often descending into little hollows, and again rising abruptly, whilst, as the evil repute of the grove prevented its being often resorted to by the peasantry, the passage was in many places almost choked up by straggling bushes and thorny underwood.

When the Baron reached the fountain he paused again, for he fancied he heard a low moaning sound mingling with the gurgling of its waters—it was but a disturbed fancy, and once more he passed forward.

He had nearly reached the end of the grove, and could behold the open and quiet glade that lay be-



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

yond, when he distinctly observed a figure cross the opening—it disappeared among the trees, was seen a second time, and stationed itself in a slip of moonlight that poured through the branches.

The form was that of a tall man covered with a dark mantle, the folds of which were drawn over his face, and having in his hand a long staff entwined with oak leaves.

The Baron had come out to seek, not to avoid, the midnight wanderers of the forest, and he advanced firmly.

"You are the Baron La Roche," said the figure, in a voice so harsh as to be scarcely human, at the same time stepping forward so as immediately to confront the Baron.

"I am," answered Henry. "Who are you that presume to bar my way?"

"I am *he* whom you seek," replied the stranger. "Speak briefly—what is your will?"

"I will first know with whom I speak," said Henry.

"Fool—what matters it—you come to seek aid—take it from him who offers it, or return the way you came, and repent at leisure and in vain."

"And how do I know your power to assist me?"

"Why thus—I am Der Schwarzman," said the stranger, and, flinging aside his mantle, he displayed a countenance more resembling that of an animal than a man;—his skin dark as a negro's and a hideous



## THE LEGEND OF LA ROCHE

sneer adding still more to the distortion of the features. Despite his natural and assumed courage, the Baron's voice faltered when he addressed the next question to the most dreaded spirit of the forest.

"And now will you aid me?"

"As you will," answered the wood-demon; "but think not that I serve any for nought."

"What do you ask? Quick, tell me—wealth is useless to you."

Der Schwarzman laughed aloud.

"Gold, jewels, rank, honours—dust, straw, meteors, bubbles—what are these to me? But I will have tribute, Henry La Roche, or you shall not return to scoff."

"And what would you have? Give me but the power of regaining my father's standard, or retrieving his honour and my own, and ask and take what you will."

"Swear this."

"I swear," said Henry, "my wish obtained, the castle of my fathers does not contain that which is not freely and wholly yours."

"Give me that ring, that you may not recede from your word."

"And give me a pledge, Schwarzman, or I trust not yours."

The spirit laughed again.

"Bruder Khuleborn!" he cried, and a second fig-

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

ure emerged from the wood, resembling the former, but without the oaken staff.

"Bring hither the sword which we keep for the Baron."

Khuleborn vanished, and returned in a few seconds, bearing a richly inlaid sword which he held towards the Baron.

Henry grasped it eagerly. "With this I shall conquer?"

"Fear not," answered the demon, "and now be gone. Lebewohl, Bruder La Roche."

A yell of fiendish laughter rang through the wood as the Baron turned to depart.

He returned home, and when morning broke he was an altered man. Right joyful were the vassals to hear that their young lord proposed in person to lead them to the recovery of the lost banner. He bade a fond and reluctant adieu to Adela, and, even amid all the strange and conflicting feelings which his new situation excited, a presentiment of evil was the strongest when he folded that beloved sister in a last embrace.

Never was youthful champion more prosperous—his sword pierced the bosom of his father's foe, his own hand regained the standard, and he was on the point of returning in triumph to the castle when a panting messenger arrived.

The Lady Adela was missing—no trace of her could be found—and the wildest conjecture left her

## *THE LEGEND OF LA ROCHE*

disappearance unaccounted for. The distracted brother hastened to his home. The affrighted and mourning domestics had no comfort to give and no tale to tell which could throw the faintest light upon the mystery. The sister had attended mass in the castle chapel the third evening after his departure, and immediately on its conclusion had retired to her bower and dismissed her attendants for the night. Her nurse and favourite woman slept in the ante-chamber adjoining her apartment. A deep slumber had fallen upon both, which made them unconscious of any sound or movement in their own or their lady's chamber during the night—but on awakening with the morning far advanced, and hastening in terror for their negligence to attend on their mistress, they found her apartment empty, though with closed doors and windows barred on the inside.

Vain was the search—no trace could be discovered. The deep sorrow that reigned through the household stifled even the natural expressions of wonder and curiosity which might have found their way from the menials' gossip to form the marvel of the surrounding neighbourhood—and severe were the strictures passed upon the unsocial and thrifty Baron by the numerous allies and friends of his family, when, even after the signal triumph he had just achieved, his gates remained closed, his banquet unspread, and his paternal halls dark and solitary.

They guessed not the feelings with which the lord

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

of the forest wandered through his deserted chambers. There was silence in all—a charm was broken—the beam was quenched which had spread sunshine around. Yet he loved to enter the little chamber which had been his sister's—for there the memory of the happy hours they had spent together was sweet even in its sadness. Tears came to relieve the oppression of his heart; and now, after the lapse of nearly a month, when every hope had died, and the exertions of even the most zealous had slackened, the desolate brother, reduced to a mournful inactivity, seemed to take a sad pleasure in dwelling upon his grief and conjuring up the vivid remembrances combined with that object of undying affection and unceasing regret.

One evening, after sunset, Henry hurried towards his sad but favourite resort. He walked slowly and dejectedly along the echoing galleries, when his ear was suddenly arrested by the sound of music proceeding from Adela's apartment. It was the music of a lute, accompanied by a female voice. He stopped and listened—the tones were distinct and harmonious, and he could distinguish the air and even the words of a favourite ballad of his sister's.

The Baron knew that voice—it was Adela's—that dear voice, whose tones seemed now to possess a double portion of the sad sweetness which had often calmed his fiery mood and soothed his perturbed spirit;—yet now a chill shuddering passed through

## THE LEGEND OF LA ROCHE

his frame, his hand trembled on the latch of the door without power to raise it, a fearful sense of guilt, remorse, and horror was awakening within him. Scarce a minute had elapsed when the mysterious songstress again commenced a low, wild, and irregular chant;—Henry had never heard aught like this before.

He knocked impetuously at the door—it opened—there was a slight rustling sound, a thin mist seemed floating around, but the chamber was empty. Adela's lute and veil lay upon the couch just as they had lain untouched since the last evening she was seen. Startled and bewildered, the Baron stood motionless in the centre of the floor, striving to collect his scattered thoughts and senses; but, as recollection returned, a shuddering awe crept over him, he passed out of the room with stealthy and noiseless steps, carefully refastened the door, and returned to his own apartment.

"It was her voice," he muttered. "Do spirits sport with me? Does Adela, an angel now, mock my misery?"

As his eye glanced round he missed the charmed sword, which he had placed upon the pedestal. It was gone, and in its place lay the ring he had given to Der Schwarzman.

Henry shrieked with agony.

"My pledge returned!—the fiend—the fiend has my sister."

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

The horror of the thought rendered him motionless for a moment; he then rushed from the room, hurried to the little postern gate, and in a few moments was crossing the green slopes towards the forest with the speed of desperation.

The moon was rising—higher and higher she mounted, and brighter and brighter were her rays cast upon the earth; and when Henry entered the fatal grove the grass beneath his feet was chequered in patches of deep shade and glistening silver. Onward still the Baron hastened, dashing aside the opposing branches and the dancing streamers of woodbine that festooned across his path. At last he paused—the little fountain was before him, throwing forth its brilliant jets of water in the moonshine; a bending female form was seated beside the mossy basin, half shrouded in a white floating veil, her long locks of fair hair glistening with the spray that rose around her.

Henry crossed himself; he doubted not that he beheld the mermaid of the fountain, but he advanced steadily. The figure moved—the face was slowly turned towards him,—pale, cold, and sad; but that face was Adela's.

"My sister, my sister!" cried the joyful brother, and darted forwards.

A faint shriek rang in his ears, there was a rushing sound, a thick cloud of spray mounted high in the air, and when it had melted into dew the figure had



## THE LEGEND OF LA ROCHE

disappeared. Henry sank upon the turf. It was dead midnight, the moon had set and the stars alone were twinkling in the dark blue heavens ere the unhappy Baron recovered his senses. The ceaseless gush of the fountain alone sounded on the still hour, and once more he fancied that the moans of a human being mingled with its wild murmurs.

He sprang from the ground and would have fled, but a strong arm withheld him—Der Schwarzman stood by his side.

“What, Baron, are you not satisfied? Is not your wish accomplished, and have I been unreasonable?”

“Fiend—falsest, most accursed demon!” raved the unhappy Baron, “give me back my Adela—my sister! In pity—in mercy restore her.”

“Fool!” answered the wood-demon, “and what could you give her like the splendour which awaits the bride of Der Schwarzman? She lies yonder in a crystal palace, where the song of the waters lulls her to slumber, and the lilies and rushes are bending over her couch.”

“Mock me not,” cried Henry. “Restore me my only sister, or dread the vengeance of an arm of flesh opposed to the wiles of a malignant spirit.”

“Peace, madman, she herself shall tell you whether she is not satisfied.” He stretched his oaken staff over the waters, they shrank into their basin, and all was silent. The Baron pressed forward, with every sense wound up to painful acuteness.



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

A sound like a deep sigh rose from the fountain, and Henry fell lifeless to the ground.

Before the dew had dried from the grass the footsteps of the Baron were traced by his anxious domestics. His body was found stretched beside the spring; it was conveyed home, and the recovered banner placed over the coffin of the last Baron La Roche. The castle has fallen into decay, but the little fountain in the grove still plays as freshly as ever. It is asserted by the peasants that more than once a benighted traveller has seen a female figure weeping by its side. A long floating veil shrouds her features, and she neither looks up nor answers when accosted, —and after such a tale the peasants cross themselves and assure the startled wanderer that the form he has beheld is no other than that of Adela, the mermaid of the fountain. So ends the legend.

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In the XVI century La Roche was regarded as one of the wealthiest and most considerable towns of the Ardennes. It was the seat of the County of La Roche, "which also," said the Mayor, "comprised the baronies of Beauraing, Houffalize, Hamoir and Han-sur-Lesse." He pointed out to us the hill of Corumont, upon which is a great block of rock called the "Bed of King Pepin." He said that the town had repeatedly been destroyed by fire, but as far as we could see there was now no sign of such devastation

## THE LEGEND OF LA ROCHE

in the peaceful valley, where the walls of the clean, white-washed cottages shone in the sunlight, against the dark face of the cliffs. The people of the town we found polite and gracious, more so than usual, I fancy, to tourists, and undoubtedly this was due to the introduction which we had from the notary addressed to the Mayor of La Roche, and this made our stay very pleasant. The town is overrun with large goats, which are stabled for the night underneath the houses in a sort of cellar way. The people use the milk freely, but I must say that we did not find it very palatable, perhaps from prejudice. In the morning and in the evening young girls drive the goats to and from the town, and they are quite a picturesque addition to the scene. The people use the walloon (pronounced wal-on, *not* wall-oon) tongue, which differs from French as will be seen in the example given:

*Walloon* *Il gna pu d'brouli ki d'poussir.*

*French* *Il y a plus de boue que de poussière.*

It is somewhat confusing to both the French and the Germans, while to an Englishman it is well-nigh, if not wholly, unintelligible.

The landlord, who could speak both tongues and had a smattering of English as well, delighted in instructing us in the pronunciation of the words of a village song, and in this the whole table d'hôte would join at times with enthusiasm.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

On the Sunday of the Fête, for, of course, each town will have its Fête or Kermesse, we saw much to entertain us. This one was called "*Amecht*," and the Mayor informed us that the word comes from the old German *Ambahti*, meaning judicial power, and was a sort of mystery play, occupying itself with the morality of the village, trying cases connected with crops, and the relations, moral and civil, of the inhabitants. We saw only the street side of it, but I was told that the indoor performances were often side-splitting. Now, knowing something of peasant manners, I can imagine the character of some of the celebrations, but all the same, had I known in time, I should have persuaded the Mayor to introduce me to them. The peasants on Sunday morning, all dressed in their best, dragged through the streets a dummy stuffed with straw, mounted on a high-bodied wagon. This effigy had been tried and convicted of certain impossible crimes, and thus was being taken to the square to be beheaded and burnt. After this there was great merriment, and gatherings of young men and women danced together tirelessly. In the evening there were torch-light processions, music, and much beer drinking and noise, but finally it all ceased, and by midnight the little town was still beneath the quiet stars, and only the noise of the rushing river was audible.

*Something about the  
"Sangler"*



## Something about the "Sanglier"

MONSIEUR the Mayor of La Roche told us that the fierce-looking, lean, brown dogs we sometimes met with in our walks, who often ambled at heel and made slobbering friendly advances to us at the door of the hotel, were what he picturesquely called "pig dogs," and that their *raison d'être* was the wild pig, or boar of the Ardennes, "who makes sport like Samson for the Philistines." Lately he has increased, and by right of numbers is now lord of the forest's manor. His feeding time is the stillness of the night, and from his leafy dens he makes forage upon the rich potato fields, to the dismay of the farmer. The best time for the hunting of the boar is the winter, for then his tracks are easily followed, and the sport is a most popular one. The hunt is not easy, however, for the climb of the often almost inaccessible heights in heavy snow is hard indeed. Trackers are sent out to search for and mark the "spoor," and when these return and report, the hunting party sets forth with guns, spears and dogs. It is usual to draw lots for place, and thus each hunter

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

bears a distinguishable number. Many join the hunt who do not participate but enjoy the fun and excitement. The hunters are under a *Garde de Chasse* who places the men in a wide half circle around the "spoor" or track. When all is ready, the head keeper blows his horn, the dogs are loosed and rush in, and —out comes the *sanglier*. Poor brute, he now has a hard time of it, and his fate rests upon his ability to outdistance or dodge the dogs. The boar is a good runner and he is cunning, too. When he is cornered and backed up against a cliff, with burning red eye and flashing tusks, how he will fight! And what a lot of killing he takes before the fatal stroke is given him! Sometimes the hunt lasts for two or three days, and it has its dangers, too, for the hunter as well as for the dog, and there are stories of men who have been permanently crippled by the tusks of the fierce brutes. Hardly a house in the region but is decorated with head and hide of the Ardennes *sanglier*, and if you wish to enjoy the patron's favor, ask him to relate his tale of that particular *chasse*!





On the River Lesse



*Some Forest  
Industries*



## Some Forest Industries

*T*HERE are a number of occupations among the forest dwellers which are unique and characteristic. I am not including the activities of poachers and nomads, but those more lawful and peaceful pursuits which are supported by the villagers and whose followers are known as honest workmen. Of these and entitled to the first rank are the charcoal burners. For the making of this fuel used so universally throughout the country is unquestionably one of the most important of industries. The labour of these men is carried on throughout the whole year, and thus the charcoal burner passes almost his whole life under the thick shade or the naked branches of the huge forest trees. Born in the forest, he grows up in it, marries and in turn founds a family for himself. Something of a nomad himself, he passes from region to region, in the forest, travelling wherever there is a chance of a felling of trees, for the thinning-out process is going on increasingly, so that one fears for the fate of this noble forest. One comes upon these clearings, sometimes on the side of a lovely wooded slope cruelly

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

gashed by the axes of the woodmen. The charcoal burner's hut is usually of a conical shape, with a roof of sods. Rain, snow or sunshine is all one to him, and when he has made an arrangement with the forest contractor, he encamps upon the spot and begins to construct his furnaces, or charcoal pits. These pits, called *cuisages*, are usually situated in spots sheltered from the wind, and are always conveniently near to some road. The operation of building the furnace, as the Mayor of La Roche explained it, requires much skill and patience. On the chosen spot nine paces are counted off for the diameter of the kiln. A circular space is formed in the centre for the fire-pit, by driving stout poles into the earth. These stakes are called *attelles*, and must be very dry, and split in quarters, with the upper ends resting together, and then row upon row of round sticks are placed until the whole circle has been completed. This is called the first *lit* or bed. Then this operation is continued, layer upon layer, until the whole is in the form of an inverted funnel. This is covered with twigs and fresh earth. The top is left open, and through this the fire is kindled with brush and leaves. Openings leading to the centre are left from the outside, and through these air is admitted. The tube serving as a chimney, the wood soon begins to burn. Now come the fatigue and skill of the workmen. When the smoke, at first white, becomes darker and more pungent, the openings are stopped up with



Charcoal Burner's Wife and Child





## *THE CHARCOAL BURNERS*

fresh earth and thereafter but little air is left in. The charcoal burner must exercise extreme vigilance, always know the condition of his fire, and understand its control. Should the fire roar, he knows that combustion is too rapidly proceeding, then he rakes fresh earth over the openings. Should the wind rise, he must shelter the kiln with huge screens of branches. Thus from the time he starts the fire he enjoys but little rest, watching it by turns day and night. This occupation, with its nights of watching and little sleep, makes the charcoal burner a nervous, taciturn, melancholy sort of being. He rarely cheers up save at supper time. When off duty he is surrounded by his wife and children, he is eating his squirrel stew, and drinking his thin sour beer. Then he rolls himself up in a blanket among the tree roots, and sleeps for an hour, after which he returns to work. The roar of the fires can be heard from a distance, and as night comes on, the children drop off to sleep, and nothing more is seen in the gathering darkness but the red blaze through the foliage from the kilns, and the long, dark, mysterious shadows of the men tending them. Although his pleasures are few and the life is so hard, the charcoal burner is wedded to his trade and never wearies of it. The nomadic freedom of the woods has for him the charm of a wild sort of poetry, and he scorns all other occupations as monotonous. To him the forest is his home, his bread, and his very existence.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

If the charcoal burner be thought silent and melancholy, the wooden-shoe maker is exactly the opposite in temperament. One may hear his noisy laughter and loud song ringing out to the accompaniment of the strokes of his short hatchet with which he shapes the rough-hewn blocks for the finisher. Unlike the charcoal burner, he does not work at night, and although he works as hard perhaps, yet it is only in the daylight, and methodically, without the anxiety which wears so upon the former. Like the other, the wooden-shoe maker is also a nomad. To-day he is at work at the brookside; to-morrow he is encamped upon a clearing far up the hillside, but it is all one to him where he works. Thus he traverses the regions of the great forest. Bound to the villages by the slenderest of ties, he nevertheless, unlike the charcoal burner, has somewhere or other a habitation of some sort, in which he lives except when his work is dull, or when he has given up his trade, through sickness or old age, and takes to his bed to die.

The Mayor tells us that the best wood for the *sabot* is walnut, but in those parts of the forest, where walnut is scarce, beechwood is used. He says that a beech tree fifty feet high will make six dozen pairs of *sabots*. After the trunk is sawed into sections, these are split with a tool called a *coulter*. The workman first rough-hews the form of the shoe with a hatchet, then he passes these cubes to another worker, who bores holes in them with a sort of large gimlet, then



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The Sabot Maker's Family



## THE SABÔT MAKER

hollows the inside with a tool called a *cuiller*. At this work he sings most merrily his folk song, digging out the tender fragrant wood, and making ribbons of white shavings, as lustrous as silk.

He fashions the huge *sabots* for the workingman, the lesser ones for the women and girls, and then the small ones for the children. The last of the wood is used for the *cotillons*, as the tiny ones are called, those for the very little children. When the sabot has been hollowed out with the *rouette*, the *pareur* smoothes and passes it to the man whose task it is to give it its complete and fashionable shape, for there are, be it said, fashions in wooden as well as other shoes. This is usually a master workman, who finishes and polishes the sabot, and if it is for a woman, he carves a rose or some such device upon it, according to his taste. Then the children apprentices place the *sabots* before a green wood fire which hardens and smokes them to a warm, brown, waxy color. And so goes on the work until all the wood allotted to the workmen has been used up, and then they move on to another locality. All the year round, the forest, whether clad in green or clad in red, or leafless in the winter, hears the busy hum of some sort of work going on, and one cannot wonder at the affection these people feel for it.





*Winter in the Forest*



## *Winter in the Forest*

THE city dweller, knowing little of the forest save, perhaps, during the summer months, is prone to imagine that its real beauties are disclosed only during the hot season when it is covered with verdure. The forest lover, the painter, or the hunter, however, knows that winter reveals a severer and grander aspect of sylvan nature, as well as more subtle and delicate silence. These great beech and chestnut trees then are revealed in a new light. All unclad, denuded of their leaves, they show a mighty architecture and a true dignity worthy of the worship of the ancient Druids, who once lived and prayed among them. Your true forest lover can in these dim winter days admire more understandingly the bold upshooting of the mighty gnarled trunk, and the characteristic ensemble of its personality. All about are the wondrous variety and richness of the neutral tones in which nature clothes them for their winter rest. Here are the silvery grey of the beech; the warm browns and blacks of the chestnut and the oak;

## *THE FOREST OF ARDEN*

the velvety rich green of the moss in the hollows of the great gnarled and twisted roots; the brown of the briar and the tawny red and dull gold of the dry rustling leaves of the oak. All these tones blend exquisitely with the grey misty background. The fallen leaves form a thick, soft covering of faded and subdued tones, like those of an oriental rug. One distinguishes the pale straw-coloured leaves of the sycamore, the bright red of the maple, the yellow saffron of the birch, the violet and copper of the chestnut. What delight on a frosty late autumn morning to walk upon this magnificent tawny carpet in the Forest of Arden! A thin rime of snow has perhaps fallen during the night. The sky is a clear cobalt blue, and against this the bare branches, sparkling with thousands upon thousands of ice particles, shed rainbow hues in the clear sunshine. Upon the fallen leaves is a powder like a glazing or varnish, and the thin, clear air is filled with a fine frost dust that flies about in clouds like the tiny white souls of the coming spring flowers awaiting their birth. And then how one loves the forest in the early spring, when the ground is swelling and bursting with the up-coming verdure, and the forest, washed by a warm rain, is full of mysterious sound. Every instant the path is crossed by some mouse or mole, and if one steps cautiously, one may, perchance, see a roe or a stag standing nose in air, amid the thickets. The

## *WINTER IN THE FOREST*

slightest strange sound will cause them to vanish so quickly like phantoms. Overhead in the bare branches the blackbird whistles to his answering mate.



*Betrothals and  
Weddings*





## Betrothals and Weddings

**I**N the forest villages may still be found the true principle of marriage all unconsciously observed. In the large cities they say that love matches are becoming more and more rare, and it may be so; but in these simple villages the lover does not usually seek a mate because of her *dot*, which is rarely of great account, and the young people do not marry until the swain is well able, through his own thrift and industry, to support a wife and family. Considerable liberty is allowed to young girls, and life in the open with the consequent association gives confidence to the girl, and an independence not enjoyed by her sisters in the cities. It rarely happens that this liberty has any serious danger, for the good priest is ever upon the watch, and the girls are really very dragons of virtue. Sometimes when the parents have not been consulted, they make violent oppositions to the young people's engagement, and betrothal, but, as a rule, the matter is settled peaceably, and there is a great celebration at the homes of the contracting parties, usually a dinner party, at which speeches are made, tremendous

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

quantities of food and drink consumed, and then an interval ensues in which the arrangements for the marriage are all made. This interval, so the Mayor told me, often lasts for years, but the engagement once made is rarely, if ever, broken. The village weddings are very noisy affairs. As much show and display as possible are made by both families. All the friends and relatives for miles around through the forest region are invited to participate, and in the house of the bride great preparations have been going on for weeks. It is customary for the young folks invited to defray the cost of the music at least, and each girl must select a partner who shall act as her squire, and be at her call throughout the ceremonies. This squire must present his fair partner with a pair of white gloves, and a large bouquet of artificial flowers, arranged in a white cut-paper covering. A procession is then formed, proceeding first to the Mayor's office, then to the Church, marching two by two, headed by as many pieces of music as they can afford. When the ceremony is finished at the Church, and the bride and groom appear, the young men fire a salute with guns, and then all proceed to the house where the banquet is served, and where the young couple take their places at the door, to give and receive the congratulatory salutes and kisses of the guests. Those of the bride are given to the men, and the groom's to the women, amid screams of laughter and more or less coarse pleasantries. The



A Rainy Sunday



## *BETROTHALS AND WEDDINGS*

wedding banquet is a most important part of the ceremony, and lasts all the afternoon. The table fairly groans with roast and stewed meat, and huge pastry pies of pork and hare ornamented with coloured rosettes of cut paper. At the head of the long table sit the bride and groom, then the parents, the guests of note and the old people. Opposite to them are the young folks, and finally at the lower end of the table are the small children. Then the father, or the guest of honour, if there be one, rises to drink to the health and happiness of the couple, and, sometimes, he will sing a song of more or less pertinence to the occasion. Sometimes it is the custom for old women to enter the room and, standing, with great solemnity chant what is styled the "Song of the Bride." This is often a most lugubrious performance, and much of the song is certainly untranslatable. These old women will then take up a collection in one of the bride's shoes, ornamented with white ribbon. Amid the noise and laughter of the feast, this song is melancholy in the extreme, although the happy pair do not seem to mind it at all. Now begins the dancing, usually out in the large barn, and here the people amuse themselves until long past midnight. It is customary for the bride and groom to leave long before the dance is over, and at a stated time thereafter the guests begin a systematic search for the couple. When they are found a serenade is given and then the ceremony is over.





*Their Daily Bread*



## *Their Daily Bread*

*N*ESTLING in these copiously watered vales of Arden, hidden away in the green recesses of fragrant woody glens, are quaint old mills, grinding noisily their daily grist, giving homely charm to the scene.

Usually astride some tinkling, foamy brook, the mossy old stucco buildings shine in the patterned patches of sunlight, sifted through the willows and white poplars which overtop them. To the painter the tender light streaming through the foliage in the fall garment of greens is delicious, and the air made fragrant by the odour of mint beds, and the warm sweet smell of the flour dust from the dusty open door of the mill, are all alluring. And yet this mill is always near a village, so that the baker may easily get his supply. We were awakened one morning by a most dismal groaning, which gave us something of a fright, but the landlord, to whom we related our fears of an accident of some sort, listened with uplifted eyebrows, and then all at once roared with laughter, slapping his thighs and waving his arms in the air. When he caught his breath he took me

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

by the arm and led me across the square to the bake-shop! There he showed me the baker, stripped to the waist, kneading the dough in the trough. The work is very hard, and tradition says that it must be accompanied by groans. "All bakers groan," says the landlord, and he is thus called *Geindre*—the groaner. Then the landlord roared again, slapped his thighs, and left me there to watch the operation.

When the dough has been kneaded to the right consistency the baker divides the mass into loaves, which he rolls in fresh flour on a board. Each of these loaves he casts into a willow basket, placed in rows before the oven. Coated with the white of egg, it swells, and, when it is properly heated, the baker takes a wide, flat wooden shovel and, placing the loaves upon it, systematically runs or slides it into the open maw of the oven. The bright light from the fire was dancing upon the walls and arched ceiling of the vault, and the huge shadow of the baker, distorted out of all semblance to a human shape, waxed and waned as he fed the fire. Then, his work done for the moment, he turned to me, and, rubbing his bare muscular arms with flour to remove the dough particles, he gave me his great floury hand and bade me welcome. Here I sat with him until the bread was quite done, and, when the oven was opened, what a delicious odour came from the delicately browned loaves, and how good the taste of a crusty roll still hot and a glass of milk!



Showing how the Girls Carry Their Baskets to Market



*In the Semois*





# *In the Semois*

## THE LEGEND OF THE THREE OLD WOMEN OF ALLE

**T**HE reader who has accompanied us thus far through the forest has discovered that these pages contain neither history nor antiquarianism, and certainly no geography. If he has tired of the journey, he may here close the book and say his say, for there is a great deal more to come, and of much the same sort, as your chronicler seeks only to entertain himself and incidentally those others who are of his way of thinking.

We are now come to a "dear little town," in the very wildest and most romantic valley of the forest of Arden, the almost inaccessible valley of the Semois. The natives here are called *Gammais*, in something of derision by their neighbours to the north, and they present a somewhat different appearance from those of the rest of the Ardennes, but I must say that we found them quaint and hospitable,

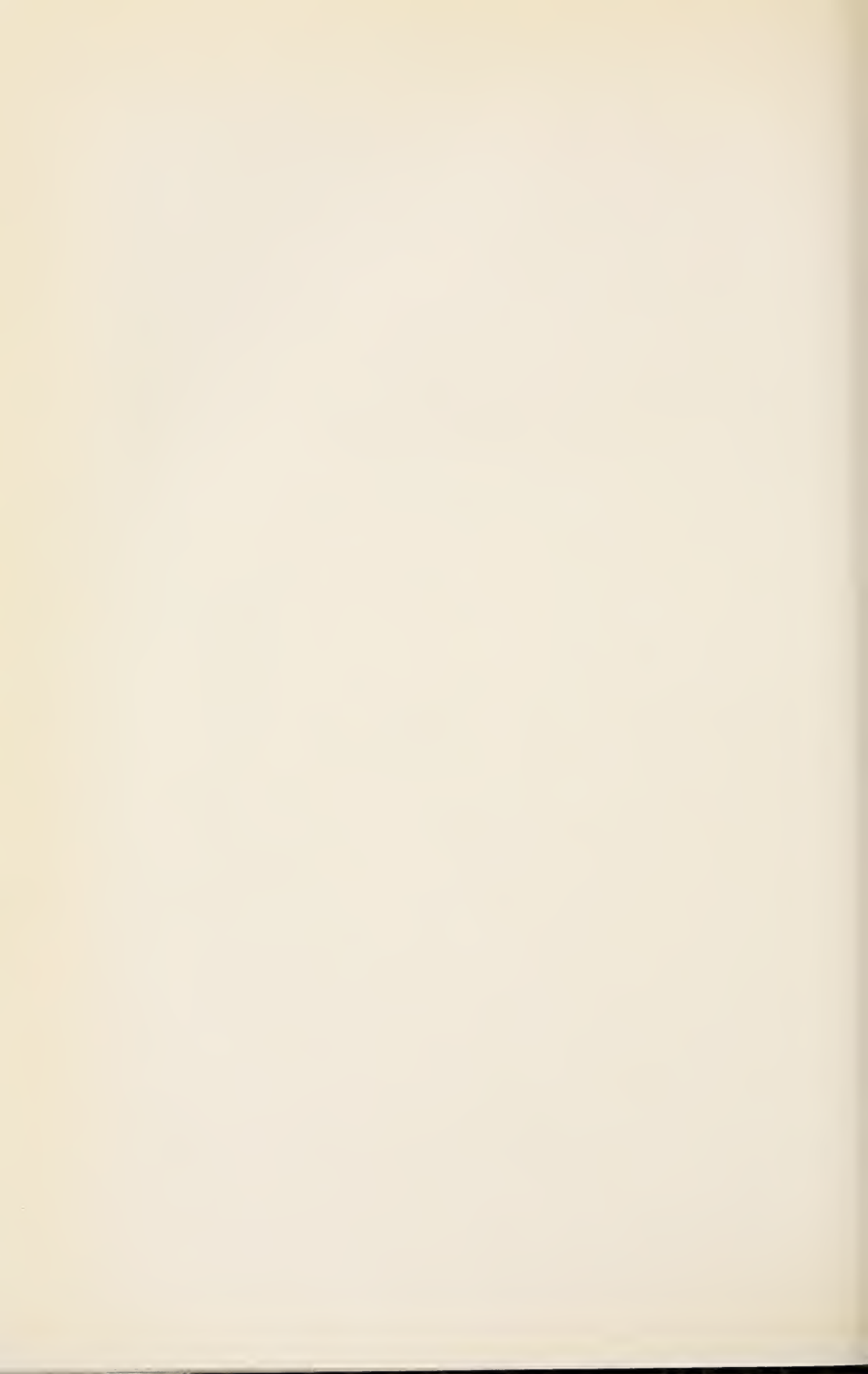
## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

although somewhat dirty. Alle is a very small town, and with its white stucco houses clustered about the church looked clean and comfortable to the travellers. There is a good bridge over the stream and the scenery is full of variety and loveliness. The inn is a surprisingly good one, and unbelievably cheap, with large clean rooms and meals well and promptly served. A travelling showman had halted here for the night, and the village was gone mad with excitement over his one poor wagon and a couple of acrobats who were doing "stunts" on a square of carpet, while in the painted wagon Madame Mother was beating a drum with one hand and holding an enormously fat, red-faced, sleeping baby to her breast with the other. Lady Anne gave her a franc, and what a smile it was that came over her worn brown face! I hope the blessing she gave may come true—who knows? Maybe it has.

Lady Anne found a beautiful specimen of a spinning wheel in the quaint kitchen, and Madame, the proprietress, was pleased at her exclamation of pleasure at the *ben trovato*. She asked if we knew the story of the "Three old women of Alle," and this is the story she related:

"There was once a peasant girl of Alle, as beautiful as the day and as lazy as she was beautiful, also as wilful as she was lazy. Very vain of her beauty, she spent hours and hours combing out her lovely long glossy hair, admiring the white and red of her





## IN THE SEMOIS

charming face and the sparkle of her deep violet eyes. Never did she do any work with those delicate white hands. Never did she touch a spinning wheel, for fear she might spoil their shape by twisting the thread. All work she left to her mother and sisters, and they humoured and petted her. One day came the news that the young prince was on his way through the Semois valley in search of a wife, who must not only be beautiful, but as well a fine house-worker. So far he had looked at all the girls from Namur and Dinant and the neighbouring country, but none of these pleased or satisfied him. Now, when the Prince reached Alle, on his way down the river road, he heard of the beautiful Marie, and when he came to the house where she lived she was alone, for her mother and sisters were away in the fields since sunrise, working hard, but Marie was ever fearful of sunburn and soiling her white hands. Knowing that he would pass her door, she stood where she could be seen, clad in her holiday gown and with her shining hair gaily dressed. She had brought out the wheel, and, when she saw the cavalcade of the Prince approaching, she seated herself at the wheel and, with a full distaff and a bobbin plum full of thread, pretended to be busily at work. The Prince stopped before the girl and could hardly contain his admiration of the spinner, who was certainly both beautiful and industrious.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

"Is it thou who has spun all this hemp?" he asked the girl.

"Yes, Prince," she replied, giving him a sidelong glance from beneath her long dark lashes, which went through him like an arrow from a bow.

"Then thou lovest to spin, dost thou not?"

"More than aught else, save housework," she replied without hesitation.

"Then," said the Prince, carried away by admiration and sudden love, "come with me; thou shalt come to court and be presented to my father, the King. There shalt thou have thy will."

So away he took her to the King's palace, where the hall was piled with fine flax, and there he said to her, "Thou shalt remain here with us for one year and one day, and, if at the end of this period thou hast spun all this flax, then will I take thee for my wife, and with me thou shalt rule and be my queen."

Now, this beautiful creature, all so useless and ignorant of any of the household duties, or of the art of spinning, was in a fine position, indeed. How should she manage? What should she do? She bowed her head, but said nothing, and they thought her embarrassed at the splendour of the palace, and pityingly gave her in charge of the duenna, who took her to the chamber which she was to occupy for a year and a day, until she had finished spinning all the flax. And the doors were shut upon her, and



## IN THE SEMOIS

locked, all save that one which led into the hall where the flax was piled. Each day food was brought to her, but never did she go forth. All day long she sat in the window and gazed over the valley and schemed and longed for liberty.

And then one day she saw passing along the road beneath her window three very old, very ugly hunchback women, who stopped and said to her, "We know all your trouble. We can help you to marry the Prince, but before we can help you to spin all the flax in the hall you shall promise and vow to invite us to your wedding." So she did promise and vow as the three old hunchbacks wished, and they vanished at once.

At nightfall, just before the porticullis fell with a loud clank, the three old women entered her room, and, after she had made sure that the great door where the sentinels watched was fast, she took them to an inner chamber, where they at once began to spin the flax. Day by day, week by week, month by month, they spun, and finally, as you may believe, by the end of the year all the flax had been spun and the thread was all neatly piled in the hall. Then the beautiful Marie called the watch, and he notified the Prince, who was all impatience, as you may believe. And when he came and saw he was so filled with astonishment and delight at such handiwork that he appointed at once the day of marriage, in ten days' time. Now, when all the preparations had

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

been made and the gowns fashioned for the bride, Marie, who was in terror of the three old hunchback women, told the Prince that she had a boon to ask, that she had three aged aunts whom she desired to invite to the wedding; the Prince gave consent readily, and they were invited. And, when they entered the castle on the wedding day, they looked so ugly, so humped, so ill-natured that all who saw them regarded them with loathing or fear. One had a huge, broad, misshapen thumb like a paddle; the under lip of the second hung down like a flabby bag; the third had a large flat foot, all wrapped about with a cloth, for she could get no sabot of the right shape.

There was so much commotion over the appearance of these horrible old women that at last the Prince approached them, and, when he saw their deformities, he asked the last one, "Why hast thou such an immense foot?" "Because, forsooth," she replied, "I have worked the spinning treadle all my life with that foot." And the Prince was thoughtful. Then, turning to the second one, he asked, "And why hast thou such a thumb?" "I," said she, "twist the flax in spinning." And the Prince was thoughtful. All at once he saw the third crone. "How came thou by so heavy a lip?" "Because I wet the flax with spittle when I spin," replied she. And the Prince frowned at the three, with something of pity, too, and then he swore a mighty oath that never, no, never

## *IN THE SEMOIS*

should the beautiful Marie, now his Princess, spin again. And so she, who had never turned a wheel, or twisted a bobbin, or moistened a thread in all her useless life, did easily win for herself a crown. But how she further rewarded the three old crones, or what else happened, the legend does not tell.



*Bouillon*



## Bouillon

GOING over to Bouillon the road is often very bad, but the sight of the great black ruin is so fine that one is well repaid. Reaching finally the top of a steep hill, one sees another just ahead, and between the two a deep valley yawns. Descending a short distance, all at once, almost at one's feet, is seen the great Château fort de Bouillon, standing upon a high, dark rock, rising from the river Semois, which here makes a great loop, so that the town itself occupies a tree-fringed height in form of a peninsula, united to the hill upon which one stands by a narrow strip or neck of land.

The hill is so steep that one must descend slowly, and the scene below is almost unbelievably picturesque, like a scene on the stage. Too much so, I think. Two very old arched stone bridges, all grass-grown and mossy, span the river, thus connecting the divided town. Very few people were to be seen in the streets and a brooding silence was over all. Dismal, some would call it; the deep green valley, the swollen river, dark and swift, and the great ruined

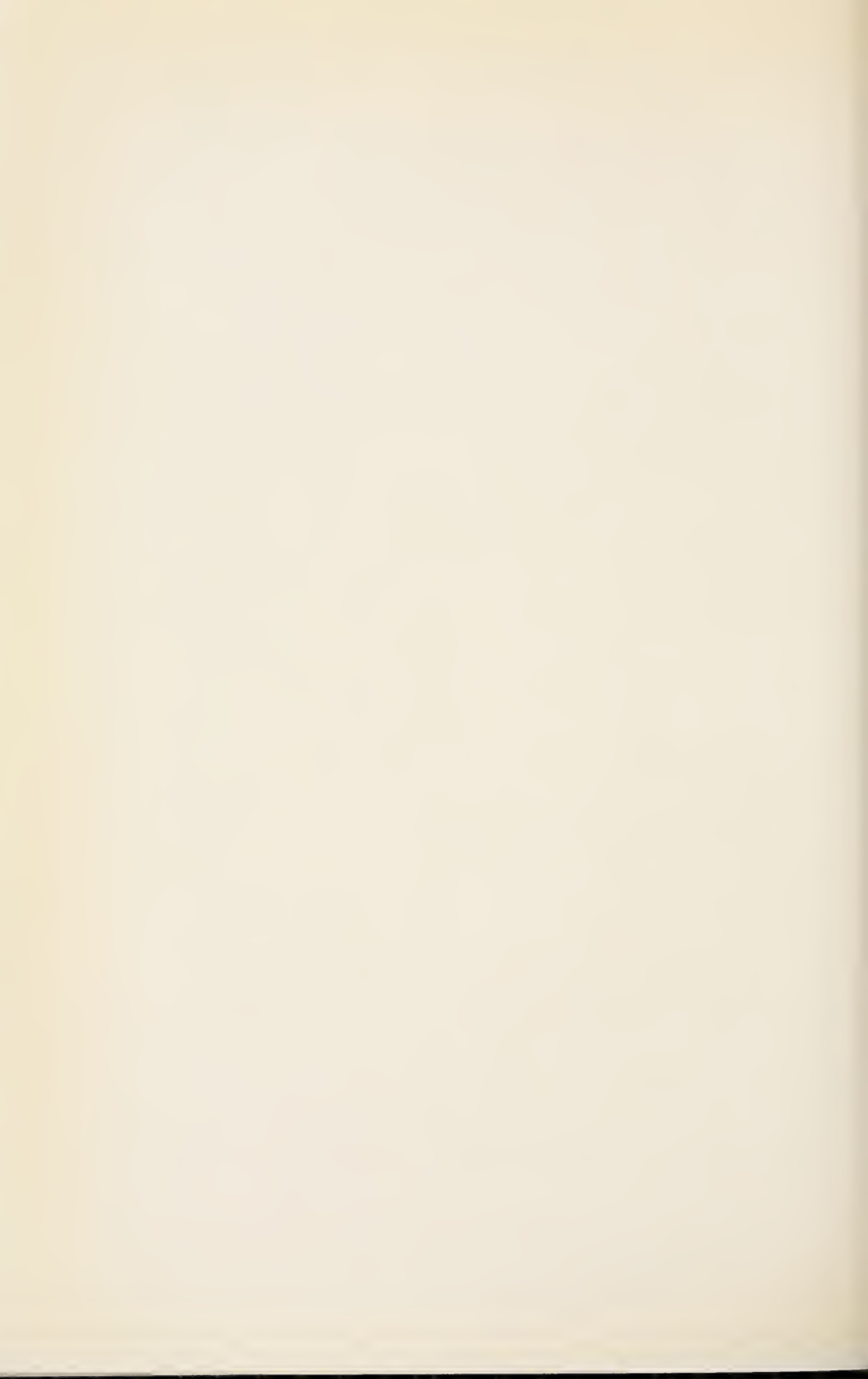


## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

castle on the hill above the town. Nature did much for this stronghold for Godfrey de Bouillon. Indeed, he found it almost ready-made; a round great mound of rock with more than a half-circle of foaming river washing its base in a perfectly natural moat. The deep, wide *cirque* is not unlike some old Druid picture. Overhead the blue sky, white-cloud-flecked; below, this dark, serpentine, winding, swirling river, and before one the great blackened ruin of the château, and ringing in one's ears the sonorous song of the cascade. Round the curve, and you will find that the seemingly isolated mount is attached to the rock face behind, where long clerestories of black tree trunks colonnade its lighter murals with gloom. At the bottom of these towering rock forms the hamlet cowers, and frowning above is the melancholy, crumbling ruin of the lair of the once potent Godfrey. I have watched this picture outlined against the bluish vapor, when in the valley behind there swept up the purple pageant of a summer storm, and to see it so, and in the blinding shock of a lightning flash, followed by the crash of thunder, reverberating against the opposite cliffs, is worth a day's journey from the comforts of Brussels. Bouillon was originally simply a nest of bandits and brigands, and the original castle was built by one Turpin, a Duke of Ardennes, in the eighth century. One can read all about it and the present château in Maquoid's good little book, so it is unnecessary here to dwell upon it



The Great Castle. Bouillon



## BOUILLON

either historically or architecturally, further than to say that Godfrey was the leader of the first crusade.

Bouillon was giving itself up to a heavy sort of gaiety on the day of our arrival. Work was off and throngs of rather sullen-faced girls paraded the town and leaned on the parapet of the bridge over which we passed. The peasant women here do not wear white coifs, and their hair is often untidily arranged. One or two of the younger women were comely, and the men were clad in velveteen coats, lavish of buttons. None of them seemed very happy, we fancied. Some of the comforts were to be had at the hotel, although the rooms were not very clean. However, we decided to remain here until we had exhausted all the attractions of this little town. We sat at the windows of our room, overlooking the street, for after the table d'hôte is over there is nowhere else to go. These small inns have no sitting-rooms, so it is a choice of either taking a promenade or going up to one's room. From somewhere near we heard the sound of loud singing. Occasionally coarse bursts of laughter, mingled with shouting and the snuffling of a wheezy organ, disturbed the ear. The proprietor told us that this was the *assemblée*, where the farmers meet who wish to hire servants, maids, herdsmen or labourers on the farms. These are called *louées*, and are interspersed with dances during the day at stated hours. The young women and men who wish engagements decorate their hats

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

or bodices with branches of green leaves or a green twig of broom. This says to intending hirers, "See how strong I am. I will serve you well for my lodging and clothes and twenty-five francs for a whole year."

Over the door of the inn waves a green branch which tells that the farmers in search of labourers are lodging there. The bargain is made and concluded over a beaker of foaming, thin, sour beer, and, as soon as the earnest fee is paid, the young people go back to the dancing. The organ snuffles and drones, the polka begins, skirts swing, and thick waists are encircled by strong brown arms. *Voilà!* What would you? They are anxious to have one more short day of pleasure ere begins their year of grinding toil. What wonder that they drink to excess on this last day of sweet liberty, forgetful for the moment of the morrow?

Some time during the night the *gens d'arme* put a stop to the organ, ordered the drinking shop closed, and hustled the boys and girls off to their different lodging places. We heard the commotion all dimly as in a dream, for we had had a hard day's journey along rough roads.

Our wanderings in the morning brought us to the river bank, where, under the willows and poplars, were rows of women kneeling in a sort of square box or boat called a *bachot*, which protects them from the



## BOUILLON

wet. There is a rude washboard set up on some stones before each. The inclined plane rests in the water, and on this the washwoman rinses the linen and beats it with a wooden paddle, also dealing as hard blows to the reputations of her neighbours. This spot is facetiously called the *Place des Bavardes*, literally "Babblers' Place," and the lively voices and sharp retorts sometimes drown the sound of the beating of the paddles. We did not linger here, for the tempers of these soapy amazons are often easily aroused, and the stranger had best beware.

We looked back at the top of the steep hill and admired the beautiful far-stretching hills beyond Bouillon, with the sun bringing into relief the green meadows and the nestling white walls of the farm-houses. On the road we met lines of carts drawn by yokes of plodding, slow-stepping oxen, all laden with brush wood, for the peasants are free to gather all the wood they wish for fuel from these vast forests and the wooded hills.

Towards four in the afternoon the village people began to congregate about the door of the inn. It was time for the arrival and departure of the daily diligence. This machine was of the olden type, and its huge brakes, in view of the steep descents, were padded with two immense old boots. I knew that there was a part of the old-time diligence called the "boot," but this was certainly a new idea of the term. The driver was a cheery, red-cheeked, lusty-looking

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

fellow, with a very loud voice, who was evidently the popular personage of the locality. He had extraordinarily oily black hair, brought around before his ears in two curled locks of which he was evidently vain, and his shirt collar, unbuttoned, showed a large portion of his chest. He swaggered about in a most delightful manner, so that we came to like him quite as much as did the villagers. Here daily before the inn, amid much laughter and many hand-wavings, he drove away in the cumbersome antique diligence.

Informed of an unusual shrine and spring back in the hills a couple of miles, I set out one afternoon to see it. Part of the way was that traversed by the diligence, so witness me on the footboard of our oily, genial driver, with a dozen boots behind my back and some over my head, while my legs were suspended over the pole between the harness chains. We had not gone a hundred yards ere three more passengers climbed up to the deck, as I may call it, and further on another couple halted us and likewise mounted *à l'Impérial*, where room was most cheerfully given them. This continued until that antique vehicle, hung upon its leather straps and built to seat not more than twelve on its top, accommodated, in some mysterious manner, half as many more. Most of these were men and women of girth and weight, and they all found seats. It seemed impossible for them to sit on so little, but they accomplished the feat, and all good-naturedly, too. The roadway



## BOUILLON

skirted at one side, most of the way, a steep precipice, commanding the wild and beautiful windings of the Semois. Sometimes, in descending a sharp turn, the horses were pulled back by the driver, and then the great pole would rise to me, and the cross-bar beneath would strike my dangling foot, which consequently had to be drawn up out of the way. This was not an easy task to accomplish, nor did I extract much amusement from it. Going down hill, I had the pleasure of almost sitting upon the back of my neck, as I was at an angle of forty-five degrees to the plane of the horizon. Thus I was in a position unfavourable for the taking of notes of the route, or for joining in the pleasantries and repartee going on over my head between the occupants of the *Impérial*. However, I had not far to go, and, at the first cross-road, I descended in safety and gave the oleaginous driver his proper fare, together with a "*pourboire*," which must have made him thirsty. Here before me was that peculiar charm of the village nests of the Ardennes. All was softly blended, like the melting sounds that come floating upward to these peaceful hills: lowing of oxen from some hidden farm; the sound of a silvery chapel bell; the rushing river's gentle, soothing sound, all merged like unto the whisper in a shell held to the ear. Here I sat me down to rest, and here 'twas I remained until it was time to return to the inn and Lady Anne. As for the shrine, I never saw it, but what matters that? There

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

are plenty of shrines in the Forest of Arden, and plenty of days in which to see them.

The great château of Bouillon looks more like a fortification than any other in the region. Indeed, it reminds one of Namur, for its towers are squatty and its ramparts seem pierced for heavy ordnance. To make its position doubly secure, the rock upon which it stands has been deeply cut away in several places, so that it is inaccessible except by drawbridges on that side facing the narrow neck of land uniting it to the hill behind. Here is a gateway between two heavy squat towers. There is a long vaulted passage dripping with moisture, and an old woman who lives there in a sort of lodge acts as porteress and guides visitors about. She carries a large lantern, which she lights and, after exacting fifty centimes each, grumblingly leads the way. Beyond the vaulted passage is another drawbridge much larger than the first, and it isolates the fortress completely from the outworks. As if this were not sufficient, there is a huge, deep moat beyond an even more gloomy vault, reached by a third vaulted passage, in which is a deep well, famous in history, and said to be thirty (or is it forty?) feet below the river bed. The old crone lighted the way to what she said was the armchair of Godfrey de Bouillon, a deep, dark, shiny hole cut out of the living rock, with which she evidently expected us to be impressed. From the topmost battlements, a hard climb, we enjoyed

## *BOUILLON*

the panorama of this most beautiful country. The hills about are so lofty, and the valley in which it lies is so steep and narrow, that one's visual range is limited; nevertheless, it is all most exquisite, this nest of the old crusader.



*The Wolf's Mouth*



## The Wolf's Mouth

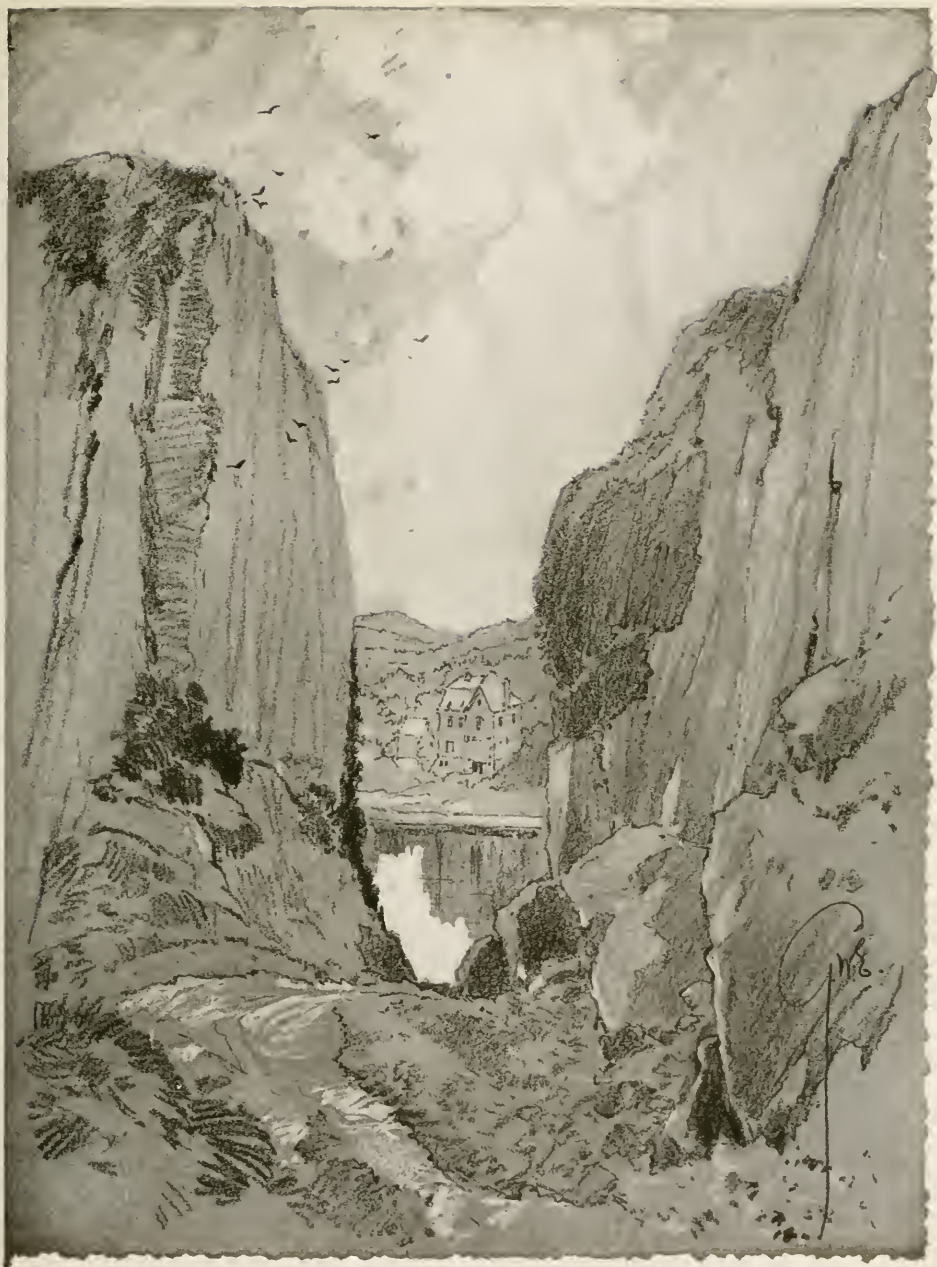
IT had been a very long day, and making our early start in the village cart from before the inn just after our coffee and rolls (for we both scorned the puffing *Vicinal*), we had found much that was new and strange and different from our expectation. Lady Anne exclaimed at the rich picturesqueness, when we had driven for an hour through what was a veritable forest of patriarchal oak trees, interrupted only here and there by broad, pale green pasture fields; and from a rising ground beyond a fording place where the road winds up the hill, she looked back over the shimmering green steeps, clad below in willows like pale, delicate mantles cast against the darker green, over a great hollow wherein lay a cluster of roofs as in a nest. Up steep hills the driver urged the fat mare with encouraging cries and endearments, and then down into deep valleys, across arched stone bridges, beneath which the waters of the Semois foamed over boulders and pebbles; past poplars straight and feathery, until, by degrees, we came upon small flocks of sheep and occasional herds of



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

black and white cows pasturing and moving slowly on the hillsides above and below the winding road. We both studied the shepherds when we neared them. One was a fine, handsome fellow, dressed in coarse velveteen, belted at the waist, and a snow-white linen shirt. He walked along with an easy, confident, swinging gait, looking strangely like a gentleman masquerading as a peasant. He stood to one side and gravely saluted as we passed. After this the men and clothes we saw were different; tall, grim figures in vast and often ragged brown cloaks that sometimes reached to their feet; small battered, pointed hats; rough, muddy woollen hose and huge shoes that loaded their steps as if with lead; they moved slowly with bent head, rough, long unshaven faces, eyes too hollow, hands too lean; wild-looking, half-fed creatures, much worse off than the flocks they drove, by all the degrees of the inverse ratio between man, who needs man's help, and beast, that needs only nature.

There was that same grimness—there comes no better word—in the faces of almost all the people we now met, as the road wound higher and then descended through the village. There was in them all the look of men and women who know that the struggle for existence is hopeless, and who must go on, who cannot lie down to die and rest. There was, we thought, on their faces the expression of those who know no effort except for the bare, hard daily bread that keeps them above ground, and who, hav-



The Rocks of Profondeville



## THE WOLF'S MOUTH

ing toiled through the daylight, lie down as they are, to forget life if they can in a merciful, heavy sleep.

These people stood and stared at us as we drove by; but the majority regarded us, it seemed to me, with but little interest or curiosity. Only the shepherds' great cur dogs, of all breeds and colours, but always big and fierce, barked furiously at the fat horse and dashed after us, snapping at the cart-wheels, then pulling up suddenly and turning back with a savage farewell growl. Peasant women, slatternly of mien, glanced sidelong at Lady Anne, if they were young; but the elders went by with scarcely a look from their leathern, set, sibylline faces, their eyelids wrinkled by care and unrewarded effort.

Most of them carried burdens, faggots, sacks of vegetables or heavy baskets; and their walk was a sharp jerking turn of the hips to the right and left.

In the country, where everything that moves and breathes is driven to the breaking point of labour, to be strong is to be cursed with double work and double burden. Above, on a hill, frowned a heavy, ragged, towered castle, resisting the ages, the lasting monument of those hard, iron warriors of a sterner time, who could not only take but hold; and they held long and cruelly.

"And is it all like this beyond?" asked Lady Anne of the driver.

"No, for there are poorer people back in the hills."

We were now rapidly nearing our destination. Be-

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

fore us, in the shadow below, the sunline, cut by the hills across the picture, was a sharp peak, grey and irregular, rising in the midst of the valley; and then beyond, as the waggon rolled along, a misty landscape of a far low valley; and then all at once the tiled roofs of the town almost at our feet. Far to the left, out from among the houses, rose a church spire, grey and bulbous. The setting sun was behind the hills and the full, round, whitey-yellow moon hung just above the spire.

A throng of peasants gathered at our arrival. Curious, silent, pale, dirty, they thronged about the waggon. An old woman took hold of Lady Anne's skirt and then brought her hand to her lips and kissed it. A ragged, thin, dark-browed girl elbowed her way and stood spellbound with unwinking black eyes, staring at the small leather handbag, clasped with silver and monogrammed, which Lady Anne carried. The men stood shoulder to shoulder, stolid and unwinking. A tall, pale lad, with something pathetically animal-like in his large black eyes, stood erect and motionless, overtopping the others by the full measure of his head and brown throat.

Before the door of the inn was a large stone basin into which water ran, and here a dozen or so of tall, thin girls in short frocks and wooden shoes were filling wooden casks. The basin had but one stream of water. The girls ceased their task and stared. Lady Anne, looking to the right and left, tried to



## THE WOLF'S MOUTH

smile at them in a friendly spirit. Some of the girls responded and extended their hands towards her in salute. The tall young shepherd grinned sheepishly and turned away, but the older men only stared on. The moment we descended from the waggon men and women and children pressed upon us to carry the bags and rugs, and followed us to the inn doorway, all talking at once in harsh undertones, and from right and left came others, including four or five wretched-looking cripples.

Some pigs were caught in the crowd and struggled to escape, squealing and grunting. Part of the throng flattened against the walls until the gathering had grown to a small multitude of curious, scrambling humanity, squeezing along to get a glimpse of Lady Anne and her silver-mounted bag.—And so we arrived at Saint Elle.

To our great surprise, the inn proved to be fairly comfortable. The room they gave us overlooked the small, open square, and the stone water-basin where the girls were filling the casks. We decided to have supper served to us in our room, rather than eat below in the dark dining-room, and the boy made a cheerful fire in our small fireplace. The house was a very old one, for the floor sagged curiously between the floor beams. The walls had been sheathed with wood painted light brown, and a great bed with a white canopy occupied one entire side. On the mantle was a clock, brass mounted, which was not

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

running, with two tall candelabra in which were four lighted candles. The firelight danced upon the white tablecloth laid for supper, and flickered rudely on the dark beamed ceiling. It was pleasant and warm, and a delightful sense of coziness and well-being came to us both, tired as we were with our long ride in the cart.

Little by little the sounds within and without grew less, and finally we heard the doors and windows being made fast. Then silence fell over all. I dropped the huge iron bar into sockets which fastened our heavy door, and placed a chair before it in such a position that any attempt to move it must awaken us.

Morning dawned exquisitely to the singing of birds in the trees and the contented clucking of hens in the barnyard. After coffee and rolls we made our plans for the day's adventures. First and foremost we must see the wonderful "Wolf's Mouth," a great cave in the hillside, easy to be explored, the inn people said, so I arranged for a guide at once. It seems that few tourists visited it, and the peasant who was to conduct us said that he had not undertaken the task for several years. He spoke a Walloon patois, difficult to understand, but he said he knew the cavern thoroughly. He told us that there were two entrances, one far up the hillside, the other opening in a ravine, a mile or so away. We decided upon the hillside opening, for Lady Anne loves to walk in



## THE WOLF'S MOUTH

the woods. After we had rested from our climb up the hillside we soon found the opening, and at once entered. Neither of us cares much for caves, but this promised some interesting stalagmites, and we had not hitherto visited any of the wondrous caves of the Ardennes. The black mouth of the cavern swallowed us. We could almost feel the darkness, but at once the guide lighted his lantern, and as its beam flared over the grim walls we experienced the novel sensation of being gradually enfolded by unnumbered tons of massive rock. The Wolf's Mouth had an evil name in this region as the abode of a prehistoric monster, and this tradition was believed even by the innkeeper, or at least he said so.

Soon the passage broadened and the descent became easier and smoother. We came into a gallery with towering, irregular walls, but there was very little of beautiful sparkling reflections, or any of the effects that are said to make these caves so fairylike. There was, indeed, no lustre, nothing save dull grey walls, to catch the rays of our guide's lantern. Our pathway was seldom difficult or irregular. There was a fine sand under foot, and now and again some strange rock shapes and outlines to be seen, but altogether the great cavern through which our taciturn guide led us seemed as little awe-inspiring as one can imagine. I began to believe that we had wasted our time, and so I told the guide. We would return to the daylight, quite satisfied with what we had seen of

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

the Wolf's Mouth. That Lady Anne was delighted I plainly saw, for she had only come to please me, she said. Now, when I came to this decision, we were in a large cavern with a very level floor. I called to the guide, who had gone a few yards ahead. He swung the lantern about curiously, then he put his hand to his side and sat down on a rock. I ran to him in great alarm, but he crumpled up and fell off the rock on his back. When I got to him he was lying motionless, with his teeth set, and the whites of his eyes shining in the light from the lantern, which luckily remained lighted. I recognised at once in the clenched hands and the foaming lips an epileptic fit. There was little or nothing to be done for the poor wretch but wait until he came out of it. But the position for us was most serious. There we were in the very bowels of the earth, and really unable to determine just what direction we must take to reach daylight. And again we could not carry the guide. All at once I thought of the lantern. We must save the light, for I did not know just how much oil we had left nor how long it would last us. We stared at each other. All at once I made light of our situation to Lady Anne: we would leave the guide where he was and turn back the way we had come, and then send help for him as soon as we could. But I knew that she saw through my seeming cheerfulness, and realised perfectly the seriousness of what had happened to us. We had advanced so

## *THE WOLF'S MOUTH*

leisurely and so far into the cavern that, even though our course in returning were a direct one, it would take time to regain the entrance, and then I did not know the path, for there had been many windings. If we remained where we were, of course, in time some one would be sent to find us. But certainly no search would be made until nightfall, or maybe until the following day, for they would argue that we had gone on to the other entrance, a mile or so below in the valley. Our predicament was, to say the very least, unpleasant. I had no time to lose, however, so I made the poor fellow as comfortable as I could where he lay. He was now very quiet, and, taking up the lantern, we hurried back in the direction in which we had come. We were too excited to talk much, although I tried to make as little of it all as I could. We hurried along, recognising few landmarks, as we stumbled over the small rocks and through the sand. When we came to a spot where there seemed to be a choice of direction, I submitted to Lady Anne's sense of locality, which is remarkable. One may judge how weary we became, stumbling along from passage to gallery, like lost spirits. All at once we heard, faintly, a whistling, then the sound of a cheery voice, singing. Staggering along, hand in hand, we turned and twisted in the labyrinth, which became closer and closer on either hand until there was scarcely room for us to walk side by side. Then all at once we found our-

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

selves in a huge narrow gallery, in which the ground sloped steeply, and at the very end of it, afar off, we saw the blessed light of day. We ran as fast as we could, and all at once there was a man sitting on a rock, his face ashen grey and his eyes staring at us. Between his feet was a lantern. Small wonder that he gazed at us in affright, and was on the point of running away. We had hard work to talk to him. He was very deaf, but we made him understand that our unfortunate guide had been taken ill and was lying up there behind us in the blackness. He led us to the outlet, one of which our guide had not told us, and pointed out a farmhouse among the trees where we might go and send help to get the guide down. From this farmhouse we sent men back to the cavern, and they soon returned with the guide, who was now able to walk. He seemed dazed and realised nothing of his seizure, but he was evidently much ashamed of himself.

We got a waggon and horse at the farmhouse, and one of the peasants drove us back to the village, where, upon hearing the story, the landlord and his wife both crossed themselves repeatedly and thanked the saints for our safety. But we had quite lost interest in the locality and its picturesqueness, so the *Vicinal* next morning carried us back to Bouillon.

*De La Marck, the Wild  
Boar of the Ardennes*









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The Ruins of Montaigne





Mountains of the Himalayas

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## *De La Marck, the Wild Boar of the Ardennes*

*A* *HARD* character this, if one may judge him by history. Monkish chronicles in Liège and Louvain speak worse of him; such frankness as was permitted to these chroniclers seems inadequate to deal with such a character as his. His ferocity at the age of seventeen won for him the name "Wild Boar of the Ardennes." No religion had he, nor fear of man nor beast. The Bishop's chancellor sought to discipline him in the hallway of the castle, and De la Marck "slew him almost before the eyes of his patron." Therefore he was banished, and went to France, filled with vengeance. Here he entrapped the Bishop into an ambuscade and "slew him with his own battle-axe." Thereafter he was a wandering commander of a mob of free fighters. Archduke Maximilian had him betrayed, and thus the Wild Boar terminated his furious blood-stained career on the scaffold at Maastricht at the early age of thirty-nine years, brave to the end. Some of these bloody years he spent at Ambleve, the château, the now insignificant ruin of which is before us to the left on a ridge of lofty rocks. Who-

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

ever would read of this doughty, bull-necked warrior, whose hand was raised against well-nigh all men with whom he came in contact, may consult Scott's *Quentin Durward*. But here is a story of him that Sir Walter plainly missed. I had it from the chronicles of Beziers, imprinted at Liège, MDXCIV. I translate it roughly, trying to give the full flavour of it in the old English:

I tell now of wild doings of William de la Marck, at this place Ambleve, and the wonder of them is great. In March the chase is up, singing in the blood. The wind which blows not north nor south nor east nor west, and which is the blowing wind of the chase, searches out those of whom it hath need, and these fare forth to the hunting,—of whether beast or fair maid, I say not. This wind blew upon de la Marck, and responded he like unto a harp touched by rude hand. They say if man or maid has loved already the case is worse. I know not of these things. They say love comes questing, and willing ones oft hear him, know not where he is, nor yet how to let him in. Of the manner of this procedure in the case of William de la Marck, you shall hear now.

Now they do say and relate at Nonce Veaux there dwelt in her father's castle a fair flower. The daughter was she of the Baron Nonceveaux, with whom de la Marck had hard words, so that never he entered the castle after. But, once seen, this fair flower, this sweet maid, Alys, was not forgot by de la Marck.





Banks of the Ambleve. Noonday





## DE LA MARCK

Now, Nonceveaux, the town, was walled like the castle, and there was a fat, squatty, grey-towered church, called for Saint Ignatius, which stood in a small square, coming from the gate to the postern, where the market was held on Fridays, and this was flagged with good flat stones. There were four poplars here beside the moat, and these were named Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, to the glory of God. Come we then to this day of windy blue sky and gleaming sunlight, when the flowers were all budded gold and green and the small town of Nonceveaux was early afoot, for the wedding of the fair flower, Alys, with young Count Glay was to come. Report had it that 'twas her father's wish and not hers, and all this was whispered among the young girls, giving spice to the proceedings. In truth, there was no little excitement in the village, for 'twas not often there was a wedding there of title with beauty, albeit beauty was unwilling.

Opened wide were the gates at an early hour, and great trade was done at the show booths that were allowed to encumber one side of the market square. At half after nine Lord Glay rode in, with his father on his right and the fat cleric of Liège on his left, followed by four of his family, a horse, but without arms or mail. Tedious to mention their names—let them pass—for 'tis with de la Marck and fair, sweet Alys that we have to do. The herald on the tower wall with trumpet announced the coming of the

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

bride party. Opened wide the gate now of the château. Pranced loudly upon the bridge planks over the moat a sweet girl on a small white pony beside a large knight-ridden war horse. 'Twas Alys and her father. Followed them her family, led by her aunt, a fair, fat lady, much girdled with a snowy laced *cornu* on her head, and two pages to bear her train. Fair, sweet Alys was pale of face, and sat her horse like one in a trance. Women said she was unhappy. It may be. I know not of such matters. They all rode down to the church door, dismounted and entered. Sounded then the trumpets in the church. Censers gave out sweet vapours; the crowd pushed at the door, and the preliminary psalm was being chanted, when two riders came galloping up, all dirt and spatters, their horses with heaving sides and all in lather. Both riders were clad in brown leather, carried their long sleyse knives sheathed at belt, and on their heads wore pointed leather caps. One was heavy of frame and long-armed; a keen and restless eye had he; the other was lithe of frame and had a long, thin nose. These two flung themselves from their panting horses, tossed the reins to a yokel who was staring at them, and, without a word, pushed their way into the porch among the villagers, who made way for them, for these men were plainly of degree and had a masterful way with them.

One, he with the restless eye, was de la Marck, the

## DE LA MARCK

wild boar; the other was his man, Gaston. Thus they stood gazing over the heads of the people into the church, where fair, sweet Alys knelt at the altar rail, all clad in white and gold. Now what was to be done was done quickly. De la Marck pushed stealthily forward between the crowd into the church, his hand upon the long sleyse knife at his belt, his head craned forward, and, gaining the side of a pillar which was in shadow, paused for an instant, scanning the scene. Then from pillar to pillar he won his way towards Alys at the altar rail, kneeling in prayer. Soon he was within arm's reach of her, and dropped upon knee. De la Marck's roving eyes dwelt upon her sweetness, the pure curve of her rounded, downy cheek, and the slim white tapering fingers clasped upon the rail beneath her chin. All that the world contained for him was here at hand—thinkst thou that he would brook to lose her? He moistened his dry lips with his tongue and glanced sidewise about him. All were seemingly intent upon the mass, and the priest was kneeling at the altar. Clouds of pale incense rose to the roof-tree, gilded here and there by the yellow candle lights flickering like stars to the right and left. De la Marck moved a hand's breadth near the kneeling girl, who, if she saw him, gave no sign. Then out reached that long, muscular left arm of steel and gathered her quickly to him, while with his right he drew his naked sleyse knife from its sheath at his belt. The girl nestled

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

to him, making no sound. Her father, the Baron, saw what was come, and his jaw dropped in amazement, then, with an inarticulate cry, he sprang forward even as de la Marck slid away, holding the girl tightly to him, the long knife playing like a scythe about him, now pointing at his throat, now hewing right and left. Then, with a mighty spring backwards, the Wild Boar of the Ardennes turned and rushed his way through the amazed people, passed through the porch. Gaston banged the great door shut as de la Marck passed out, dropped the heavy bar in place, and slipped out at the chancel side. In a moment the sound of clattering horses upon the pavement was heard, and 'twas done! At the gate lay two sentries, one run through the body, the other with his head cloven, and far down the road, under the willows, two horsemen galloped, one holding a maid before him, her gauzy scarf flying in the breeze. Then did the lord of the castle rant and rage and swear such terrible oaths of revenge that the clerics stopped their ears in horror. Of what avail? De la Marck had won away with the fair, sweet Alys from beneath her father's eyes, almost from her bridegroom's side. Fight with the Wild Boar of the Ardennes? Of what avail? Pursuit there was none. The Baron Nonceveaux well knew where to find him. The chronicle says no more of this.

*Bayard the Wondrous*



## *Bayard the Wondrous\**

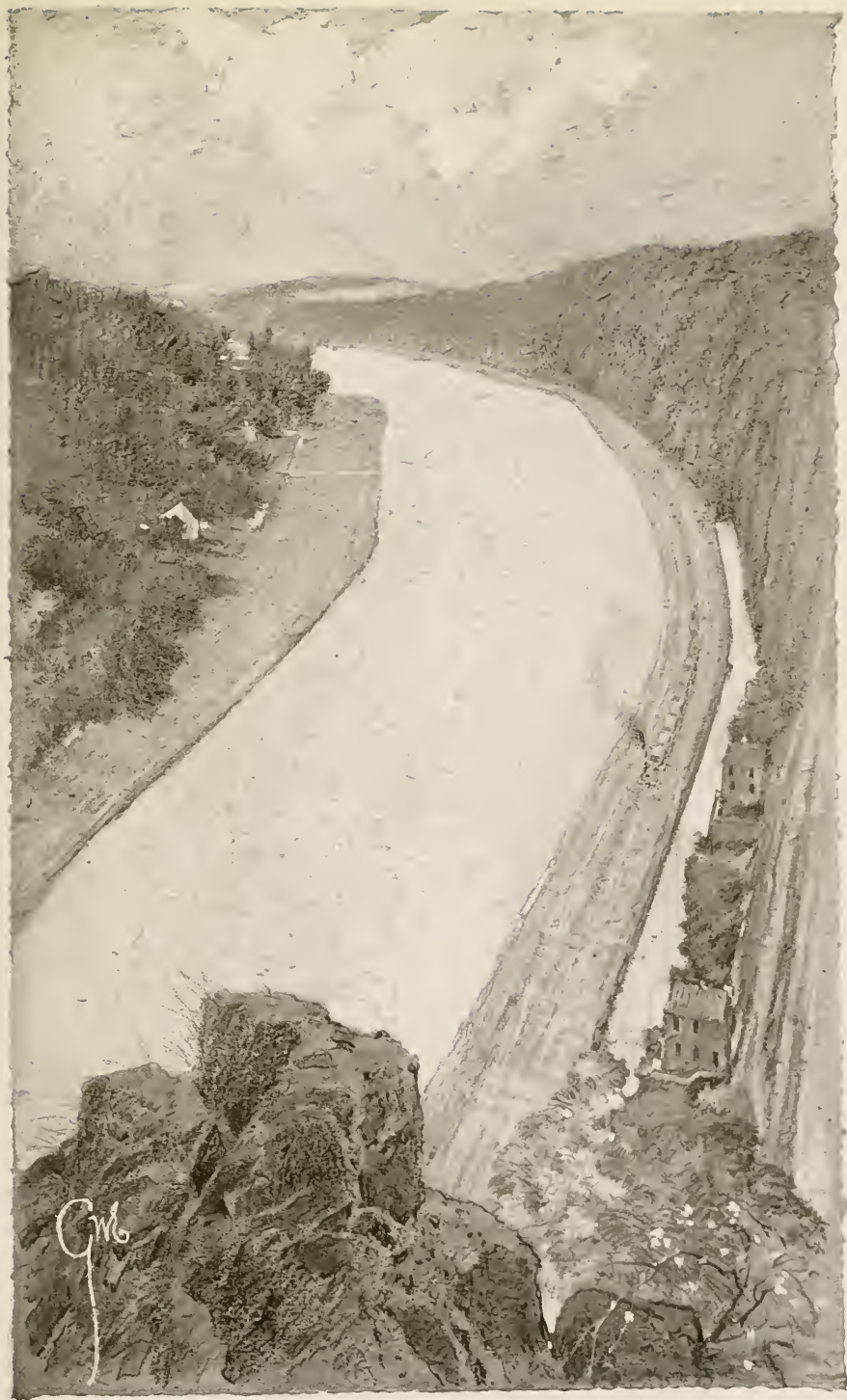
*T*HIS most wondrous and sagacious horse of chivalry plays a most conspicuous part throughout the romantic region of the Ardennes. Bayard, the horse, and the great and magical sword named Floberge were presented to Renaud, the eldest son of Aymon of Dordogne, by the powerful magician, Maugis. Bayard performs great service by his swiftness of speed, by his strength, by his intelligence, by giving the alarms, by neighing or beating on Renaud's shield with his hoofs in emergencies. Renaud was of enormous stature and strength, "being not less than sixteen feet in height." Now, there was a quarrel between Duke Aymon and his brother, Buves of Aigremont. Aigremont lies not far from Huy, where may still be seen the great castle belonging to Count d'Oultremont, and where once the Wild Boar of the Ardennes wielded his power. Now, this Buves had refused insultingly to take part in Charlemagne's expedition against the Saracens, and, when approached by the son of the Emperor in person, Buves slew him in the great hall.

\*See *Quatre Fils Aymon*, Paris, 1525 folio.



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

Thereafter in a battle Buves was killed by Charlemagne's soldiers. Then swore the four sons of Aymon, headed by Renaud, that they would take revenge, and fled to the Ardennes. Here they built the stronghold of Montfort on the river Ourthe. This they surrounded by triple walls, and sent out a defiance to the Emperor. In the battle Renault fought upon the back of the great horse, Bayard, given to him by his cousin, Maugis, son of Buves. This horse, says the chronicle, "could run as fast as the wind and never grow tired." For seven years' space the sons of Aymon were victorious, but at last Charlemagne, tiring of the harrying they had given him, sent a mighty force and captured Montfort, which he destroyed, but the four sons of Aymon escaped by mounting, all together, upon the horse, Bayard. On another occasion the horse, Bayard, played a prominent rôle in a curious racing episode. Charlemagne, desirous of securing a good charger for Roland, instituted a race. Near the goal were displayed the various prizes, including the Imperial crown itself. The winner, however, was to be given to Roland. Maugis, the magician, versed in other arts besides tricks of the turf, "dyed the black Bayard white." Thus disguised he won the race, ridden by Bayard, also disguised, who rode off with all the prizes, vainly pursued by the horsemen of the Emperor. After this, Bayard's white coat dissolved, he was recognised, and Renaud, avowing his own iden-



The River, from the Ruins of the Castle of the Four Sons of Aymon



## BAYARD THE WONDROUS

tity, made good his escape on the fleet and faithful steed.

Again, in the siege of Montaubin, a fortress at the confluence of the Dordogne and the Gironde, Renaud sallied out, mounted on Bayard, and, after carrying havoc into the investing hosts, captured the gilded dragon which floated above the tent of Roland, and hoisted it on the highest tower of Montaubon. In an ambuscade Maugis, borne by the faithful Bayard, came to the rescue, and in the sanguinary struggle which ensued "Richard was so grievously wounded in the abdomen that, in order to ply his antagonist, he was obliged to maintain his extruding intestines with his left hand" (Caxton's translation): "Now sheweth the history, after that Renaud had discomfited the Frenshemen he retorned agen towarde roche Mountbron, where he had lefte his brother Richarde thus wounded, as ye have herde. And whan he was come there and saw his brother so horryble wounded he could not kepe him from wepyng and sayd 'Alas! what shall I doo whan I have lost my dere brother, the best frende that I have in the world?' And after he had sayd that worde he felle to the grounde from Bayarde in a swoune. And whan Alarde and Guycharde sawe their brother that was fall, they began to make theyr mone for Richarde piteously. And when Renaude was come agen to hymselfe he made grete sorowe wyth his two bredern, Alarde and Guycharde upon Richarde their brother,

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

that laye upon the erth wyth his bowelles betwene hys hondes. And this hanging, cam Maugis upon Broykarre, his goode horse, the best that men wyste after Bayarde and helde a pece of spere in his hande. And whan he sawe Reynawd make suche sorowe, he was right sori for it. And whan he sawe Richarde thus sore wounded he was wrothe and had grete pyte for to see the wounde that was so grete for men sawe the lyver wythin his bodye. Thenne sayd he to Reynawd, 'fayr cosin take heede what I shall saye and leve this sorowe; ye know wel that ye be all my cousins and therefore we ought parforce ourselves for to succor the one the other whan it is nede. I have thus saccoured many tymes and wyte it that all the harme that Charlemagn bereth to me it is all thurgh your occasion he slewe my fader, but late whereof I bere yet at my hert grete herynes that was your uncle that died for your love—that ye know wel. But yf ye wyll promyse me afore all your barons for to com wyth me into the tente of the kynge Charlemagn and helpe me to sawte hym for to avenge upon hym the dethe of my sayd fader yf we can, I shall delyver to you Richarde, evyn now hole and sounde wythout any sore and whan Reynawd understood these words, he cam to Margys and kyssed hym in the brests all weepyng & sayd to hym 'Ryghte swete & fayr cosin, for god mercy, delyver to me agen my brother Richarde hole, yf it playse you. And yf ye will that I doo any other thyng for you





The Rock of Bayard





## BAYARD THE WONDROUS

commaunde me & I shall doo it wyth ryghte gode herte. For ye well wote that I dyde never ony-thinge agaynst your wyll; nor is there no man in the worlde for whom I wolde doo so moche as I wolde do for you. Whan Mawgys sawe Richarde wepe so tenderly, he had grete pyte of it, and sayd to hym 'Now bee not dysmayed of nothings fayr cosyn, for ye shall have Richarde hole & sounde incontynente.' "

At length all his generals and leaders, Roland, Oger and the others, implore Charlemagne to pardon Aymon's sons and Maugis, and, as they threaten defection, he accedes to their prayers on condition that Renaud shall go' at once to Palestine to engage in battle against the Saracens, and that the horse Bayard shall be surrendered to him. This Renaud agrees to, and, after taking affectionate leave of his faithful steed, he leads him to Charlemagne. However, a difficulty arises, for Bayard refuses to allow any one but Renaud to ride him. Thereupon, in a fury, Charlemagne orders him to be loaded with heavy chains and stone balls and sunk in the river. But Bayard, magic steed, frees himself of the encumbrances and swims across the river, escaping into the forest, "Where," says the chronicle, "his hoof marks may still be seen upon the rocky hillside." \* The legend goes on to declare that "the horse was really

\* *Histoire singuliere and fort recreative, contenat la (sic) reste des faites and gestes des quatre fils Aymon. Folio J. Nyvard, Paris, without date.*

## *THE FOREST OF ARDEN*

immortal, and that he may still be coursing through the forest of Arden, although he carefully avoids the sight of man." This legend of the four sons of Aymon and the wondrous horse Bayard is to the children of Belgium as that of King Arthur is to us. However, it is only in the town of Termonde that his representation is celebrated in the streets once a year during the Kermesse.

*How Baldwin of the Iron  
Arm Married the Devil*



## How Baldwin of the Iron Arm Married the Devil\*

**B**AUDOIN, or Baldwin, was one of the very earliest counts of Flanders, and is the hero of many legends and romances which relate circumstantially tales of his prowess, his terrible judgments, and his keen sense of justice. He was renowned, too, for his protection of the weak and the poor, as well as for his excessive arrogance and pride.

This legend deals with his gentler side. "One day," says the chronicle, "while at the chase in the forest of Arden, he met with a lady of majestic stature, arrayed in most magnificent garments, on a snow-white palfrey, who accosted him amiably, declaring she was the heiress of a most splendid throne in Asia, but that she had fled from the court of her father to avoid a marriage which was most abhorrent and disagreeable to her. Baldwin, completely captivated by her beauty and incited by ambition, carried her back to his castle, and then and there espoused her, after which he took her to the French Court, where she charmed all by her wealth,

\* Baudoin. *Compte de Flandre*. Folio Lyons, 1748.

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

her beauty, and her nimble wit. After a year had elapsed this Asiatic and most wondrous Princess brought him two beautiful daughters to his great pride and joy; yet he, in the midst of this felicity, awaited with great impatience the return of an ambassador whom he had despatched to the Imperial dominions of his father-in-law. Now came to Baldwin's court a holy eremite (hermit) who, seeing the lady and the lovely children, expressed his doubts as to the existence of this Asiatic empire, and demanded leave of Baldwin to dine in company with the Princess, which leave Baldwin granted; and when all were seated at the table the hermit entered the great hall, and, without further exordium, commanded the beautiful Princess to return to the Hell whence she had originally issued. 'This mode of address,' says the chronicle, "which none of the count's visitors, unfortunately, had hitherto thought of employing at this board, had a terrible effect upon the hostess, for after upsetting the table and filling the hall with flame and smoke, she uttered the most diabolical yells and curses, and vanished." The chronicle states that thus Baldwin, in punishment for his pride, had all unwittingly married the devil, and, in consequence of this, as a penance, he betook himself to the Holy Land upon a crusade. The two daughters, it seems, "turned out better than could have been anticipated from their diabolical descent," but of what became of them the chronicle is silent.

## HOW BALDWIN MARRIED THE DEVIL

Another of the legends deals with the investiture of the Golden Fleece in the cathedral at Bruges.\* It seems that "that count had ridden over to the city from the château de Maele to preside as lord of the ceremony. Coming through the forest with his retinue, he halted to watch the merry-making of a wedding party; he even dismounted and, with his knights, danced a round with the bride and village maidens." Then he resumed his journey through the forest, arriving at Bruges and hastening to the cathedral of St. Lauveur. It must have been indeed a wonderful scene in that great cathedral. Imagine the Flemish knights of that noble order of the Golden Fleece, all clad in their polished, gleaming mail, seated in serried rows in their carved oaken stalls, "each one with his banner and escutcheon over his head." Imagine the dim aisles of the cathedral; the clouds of fragrant incense floating upwards; the great altar with the Lord Bishops on their gilded thrones at each side; the throng of officiating priests, clad in lace and scarlet; the acolytes in ranks at the side of the altar steps; "the terrible Baudoin seated upon his great throne," his crown and sceptre borne on a cushion by a figure clad in cloth of gold; the gleaming lights from tall wax candles and the wreaths of flowers carried by fair young girls. Then the swelling notes from the horns, trumpets and bugles, and finally the young aspirant for knightly

\* Legends of Bruges, A. O'S. Brooke.



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

honours and place, kneeling in his stiff shining coat of mail, his hands clasped, and raised to the tall crucifix, in the act of taking the three oaths or vows, "To be loyal to his liege lord," "To protect the weak," "To live a pure and holy life."

"This young knight spoke the words in a loud, clear voice, and was then invested with the chain of the Golden Fleece. A white cloak with a red cross worked upon it was thrown over his armour, and his sword girded on his side." "Upon his reception into the order the knight became thus bound by oath to the observance of loyalty to his superior, to an impartial distribution of justice to his vassals, to an inviolable adherence to his word, and attention to a courtesy which embellished his other qualities and softened his other duties. All those who were unjustly oppressed or conceived themselves to be so were entitled to claim his protection and succour. The ladies in this respect enjoyed the most ample privileges. Destitute of the means of support and exposed to the outrages of avarice or passion, they were consigned to his special care and placed under the guardianship of his valiant arm." \*

After the ceremony in the cathedral, all save the young knight slowly passed out in procession. One by one the gleaming lights were extinguished, and soon there was none but he left there, kneeling before the great altar to keep his all-night vigil. The

\*Henry Wilson, *History of Prose Fiction*, Vol. 1, p. 130.



Water Mill on the Lesse



## *HOW BALDWIN MARRIED THE DEVIL*

following day, however, there were great happenings for him, for he was the guest of honour at a great banquet, at which his companions, the knights of the Golden Fleece, welcomed him as henceforth one of their order. "Now," says the legend, "when the older knights had departed from the guild hall, the more turbulent and venturesome younger knights gave free play to their fancies, and soon began the relation of certain tales which brought embarrassment to the young knight, fresh from his all-night vigil in the cathedral. In vain he timidly remonstrated with them. They would not listen. Now there were several of these knights who were extremely reckless and turbulent, and these bore the greatest and "proudest names in Flanders." One after the other they proposed adventures, each of which was wilder than the last, until finally they agreed that the most amusing and daring thing they could do would be to wend their way to the farmhouse in the forest and abduct the bride whose wedding had taken place the day before, there being ever a sort of warfare between the knights, nobles and the common people. This they all agreed upon, as fine and exciting sport, and tending towards a good fight in which they might have both sport and adventure.

Late as was the hour, Baldwin was not asleep in the castle. They say, indeed, that he rarely if ever completely undressed, or even lay in a bed. At this

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

moment he was dosing before a huge log fire in the hall. Opposite on a bench, his back against the arras, was his father confessor, a fat, shaven friar, who never left him, for, the chronicle says, "Ever was Baldwin in fear of a sudden death, and had his friar at hand that he might to him give absolution in case of need." The day had been a most arduous one, for Baldwin was a strenuous man and loved activity. Now, the good father had dined well, and, with his hands clasped upon his good sound paunch, he snored peacefully, dreaming, perhaps, of the fair capons he had that day seen hanging in the larder of the castle, and other goodly dinners to come. When all at once up jumped Baldwin and pulled the father from his bench.

"A dream—a dream I have had. A vision. By'r Lady, there's work of Satan going on in the forest. Get my horse and my men-at-arms!" In a few moments the men-at-arms were ahorse in the court, and then down came the drawbridge and away they clattered to the forest. Sure enough, there they found a pretty fight indeed between the knights and the peasants. At which Baldwin was wroth indeed, says the chronicle, and when he heard all then and there, he ungirt the knights of their swords, and had them conveyed to the castle, where they were put in cells. There was a trial, for Baldwin was a just man, and the knights were adjudged guilty of unknighly con-

## *HOW BALDWIN MARRIED THE DEVIL*

duct, and so they were all hanged in the donjon well, deep down in the depth of the castle, these four knights who bore the proudest names in Flanders.





*The Legend of the Seigneur  
of Montjardin*



## *The Legend of the Seigneur of Montjardin*

**T**HE chronicle tells of wild doings in the Valley of the Amblée, centring now at the Château of Montjardin, not the present one, you will understand, but that dark fortress which stood on the high hill nearer to Aywaille, the post town. Now, the Seigneur of Montjardin was jealous of the repute of William de la Marck, the Wild Boar, so called, and vowed a vow, gnawing his nails in discontent, that he would in all things outdo him. Thenceforward, 'tis said, no man's castle or sheep, rich or poor be he, nor his wife, nor his daughter, was safe at his hands. Upon a day when prowling about Remouchamps Convent, he caught, through a gateway opened for a moment to admit a cart, a vision of the most beautiful girl in the costume of a "novice" that he had ever laid eyes upon. He gazed in stupefaction at the vision, then into his eyes leapt his fierce want of her. He noted how tall she was, how lissome; how her skirts clung to her limbs as she slowly walked the path. Then the old woman pushed to the gate, and still he stood spellbound. Overhead the sun shone, but

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

he saw it not; instead he saw this girl. There were fair fields all about, there was a flashing river, too; but he saw not these.

He threw himself on the grass beneath a great oak, face downward, his head upon his arms. Here he remained for a quarter hour, then he sprang up, filled with resolve. The next day an old and bent beggar woman rang the bell at the convent gate and humbly craved food and shelter from the falling rain. The old gatekeeper admitted her after a very brief scrutiny, and called the porteress, into whose keep she carelessly gave the old beggar woman. The porteress brought her to the great kitchen and set before her a generous plate of broken pork pie and a stoup of skimmed milk. Great pretence made the old beggar to eat this generous fare, but most of the pie found its way to her sack when no one was watching. Then all at once she began to groan and make to-do and rub her back, crying out that her pains were great and that she had been bewitched by a sorceress, and had need of the prayers of the mother abbess, so that they ran to the abbess and fetched her quickly. And when a prayer had been said, what thinkst thou? The old beggar woman swore by St. Eloi that she was cured! Now was the good and gentle abbess much flattered and grateful that the saints had responded so quickly to her supplication. And this old sham beggar saw this, and began to tell and relate things which happened of late in



Château Montjardin. Remouchamps.





## LEGEND OF SEIGNEUR OF MONTJARDIN

Bruges and Ghent and likewise Liège, wherein dwelt the good and holy Lord Bishop. Likewise she talked of the Beguinage of Bruges, and the Mother Superior, who, it chanced, was a near relative, and, in short, so won upon the good, simple mother abbess that she took her up to the hall above, where she sat her down before her. There the crone, still muffled to the eyes, did craftily relate the news of Liège and Bruges, and so compliment and cajole the abbess that she consented to show the "novices" in the garden in response to a cringing request, never suspecting for an instant that this old *gaberlunzie* beggar woman was other than she seemed, for 'twas the wicked Seigneur all the time, you are to know. The abbess led the old beggar to the window overlooking the garden, and there walked the "novices," all clad in white. "Sweet lambs of the Virgin," said the abbess, crossing herself, as she watched them among the flowers. But the old beggar only stared and stared at one figure who walked somewhat apart, reading her missal. Now rang the convent bell for prayers, and, rousing herself, the abbess gave the old beggar in charge of the portress, who conducted her to the gate, which closed upon her with a clang of bolts and bars. Hobbling feebly away to the edge of the road which was fringed with a deep copse, behind which were the tall, thick trees of the forest, the old beggar vanished from sight of any one in the roadway or at the convent. Once in the shelter



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

of the forest, he tore off the rags that covered him and straightened his back. 'Twas the wicked Seigneur of Montjardin, of course, and well had he measured and studied the convent walls for his purpose. What that purpose was you may guess. But his plans were well laid, and doubtless they pleased him, for that night he was in a rare good humour at his great table in the château, which was never niggardly in providing for the comforts. What will you? They cost him little, a raid here or there, a good fight, perchance, and then great deeds of prowess to relate; of broken skulls of wretched peasants who sought to protect their poor belongings, or of the fine sword play of some castle lord, who went down beneath an axe stroke from behind, which emptied his brain pan. And so they remained, these swashbucklers, all his kind, and so remained the best part of the night at table, drinking strong wine, the Seigneur of Montjardin.

In three days there was great excitement at the convent near the river. The fair young novice, loveliest flower of them all, was missing. Came all that evening, as was their wont, to bid the abbess good night, after vespers. She was not among them. The fair Agnes was gone. Rang they then the convent bell in alarm! Searched they the garden, and then the river banks, but found her not. The keen eyes of the good Mother Abbess, however, found at the foot of the garden wall some scratches in the gravel

## *LEGEND OF SEIGNEUR OF MONTJARDIN*

and down-trodden shrubs; long she gazed at these evidences, and then, with a sigh, turned away to pray for the young novice at the chapel altar, after which she spoke most touchingly of the missing girl and then saw her charges safe in bed; but you may believe now that the watch was doubled, such was her terror. Now, while the vesper bell was ringing and the nuns and novices were going slowly to the chapel, one remained for an instant down at the garden's end where the flowers grew sweetly, and here lingered the lovely novice, Agnes, loth to leave this sweet spot. Just over the wall crouched four cloaked men watching, the men of the Seigneur. As the last nun entered the side door of the chapel and disappeared from view, one of the men sprang upon the shoulders of another and dropped silently over the wall with a catlike agility. This fellow stealthily crept towards the unconscious girl, removed his cloak, and, holding it like a bag, leapt upon her so suddenly that she made little or no outcry. The fellow passed the struggling girl up to his mate on the wall, who caught her deftly, drew her over and dropped her into the arms of the two waiting outside. Swiftly they bore her to the thicket by the roadside, where four horses were tethered, and in a moment they had vanished in the thickness of the forest. Now, they relate that when the Seigneur of Montjardin saw this sweet convent lamb in his castle he was fairly beside himself with glee. All

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

of his plans had worked like a mill wheel. Nothing had gone wrong. Here was his heart's desire beneath his roof, and now he could woo her at his leisure. And she? She was wailing in the upper chamber at the head of the narrow winding stair in his own private hall. He heard her all through the night as he tossed upon his bed. He had sent the women servitors to her in turn to see if any of them might suit her to be her own maid, but she would have none of them, nor would she eat or drink. The Seigneur gnawed his thumbnail away with his white strong teeth, cursing as he pondered upon the ways of maids. When morning dawned he went up to her. He spoke as kindly to her as he could, for his tongue was dry in his throat, and he was fair done by her great beauty. This he told her. That never had he seen woman so lovely! And she—what said she to his choking, halting words of love? Listen. "Love, you fool, you fool! What know you or such as you of love? You fancy it is clipping, embracing, playing with soft tresses, rounded chin! Fool, I say! Your thoughts are burning your shrivelled heart. Your heart is dwindling drop by drop, as you are consumed. Love? 'Tis the fasting before food aplenty. Love? 'Tis foul death, where the sweets of life do offer! Ah! Sweet Virgin, Star of Heaven, hope of women, what do such as you know of love?" Then melted all her fury, and she turned beseechingly to him, weeping afresh and begging him to

## LEGEND OF SEIGNEUR OF MONTJARDIN

set her free. And he made answer, says the chronicle, only by vowing his love, saying, "An' thou wilt be mine, lovely girl, I shall dress thee as no empress of Asian land were ever clad. Thou shalt have all thou cravest. Ah! My nice one, when that thou hast loved thou'lt ne'er desire to leave me. How? Am I not well favoured? Am I not good enough for thee?" But the weeping, despairing girl turned her head away, and, lifting up her cross, which hung from her girdle, prayed to our Lord and the saints that they might give her succour. Now, all this was different from what the Seigneur had looked for. Verily, says the chronicle, "No trouble that comes to man equals that which women bring." This one, indeed, had both a tongue and a temper, in sooth. How was he to deal with her? Starve her? Then her beauty would go. Beat her? Then would she in truth ever hate him. No, patience! Patience! And he locked her door again and went below. Now passed the days all slowly for Agnes in her prison high in the château. And it may be believed that the Seigneur, ill used to being thwarted in his wishes, did not improve in temper. Throughout the locality went the *haro* for Agnes, but, as her mother was dead long since and her father and brothers were off to the wars, there was no one to engage the Seigneur, even if they suspected him of having stolen the novice. So one dark and rainy day he entered her chamber, and as she, as usual, defied

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

him, scorned him, he grasped her with his full strength, and hoarsely whispered, "Now, now I will kiss you, frozen one. I will thaw you by all——" and he swore an oath so terrible that the chronicler omits it. And now did this shrinking girl cry out in terror? Not so—she drew forth something from her bosom. He held her close. In his mind rioted *might be* and *shall be*. Her shrinking shoulder pressed against him—delicate, maidenly, like unto a pale lily bud, her long loose hair alight like gold, her eyes wide with horror. "Oh, God, the mere loveliness of her," thought he, as he thus held her. From that hour his was a lost soul. Now she thrust up her hand, and in it shone, before his amazed eyes, a carven ivory image of Our Lady of Sorrows: ✠ The Blessed Virgin ✠ She thrust it into the dark, evil, passion-scarred face of the Seigneur, and he started back, releasing her slowly, his eyes starting from his head and shaking from head to foot as if in an ague. Again she thrust the Holy Image at him, but he seized it savagely, dashing it to the rush-strewn floor of the chamber. "Then," says the chronicle, "all quickly came a flash of blinding lightning, followed by a deafening crash of thunder sound, and down, down went the great château fort of Montjardin, in a mass of ruin over into the deep valley, leaving not one stone upon the other!"

There is a great church standing now near this

## *LEGEND OF SEIGNEUR OF MONTJARDIN*

spot, and upon the altar is placed, among wreaths of flowers, a small carved image of the Virgin. Each year to this spot many pious pilgrims come from far and near for worship. It is called Notre Dame de Dieu-Part. More than two centuries ago a couple of shepherds were walking amid the ruins, when all at once one of them stumbled upon a small image, which he picked up, and they both saw that it was of the Virgin. Then they remembered the legend, and took it to the priest, who assured them that it was that holy image which had so miraculously spared the young novice of long, long ago from the cruel Seigneur of Montjardin, and that, as it was holy and belonged to God, it must be called Notre Dame de Dieu-Part, and so it was enshrined with great ceremony upon the altar, where it may be seen to this day.





*Franchimont*



## *Franchimont*

"Amassed through rapine and through wrong,  
By the last lord of Franchimont." (Scott)

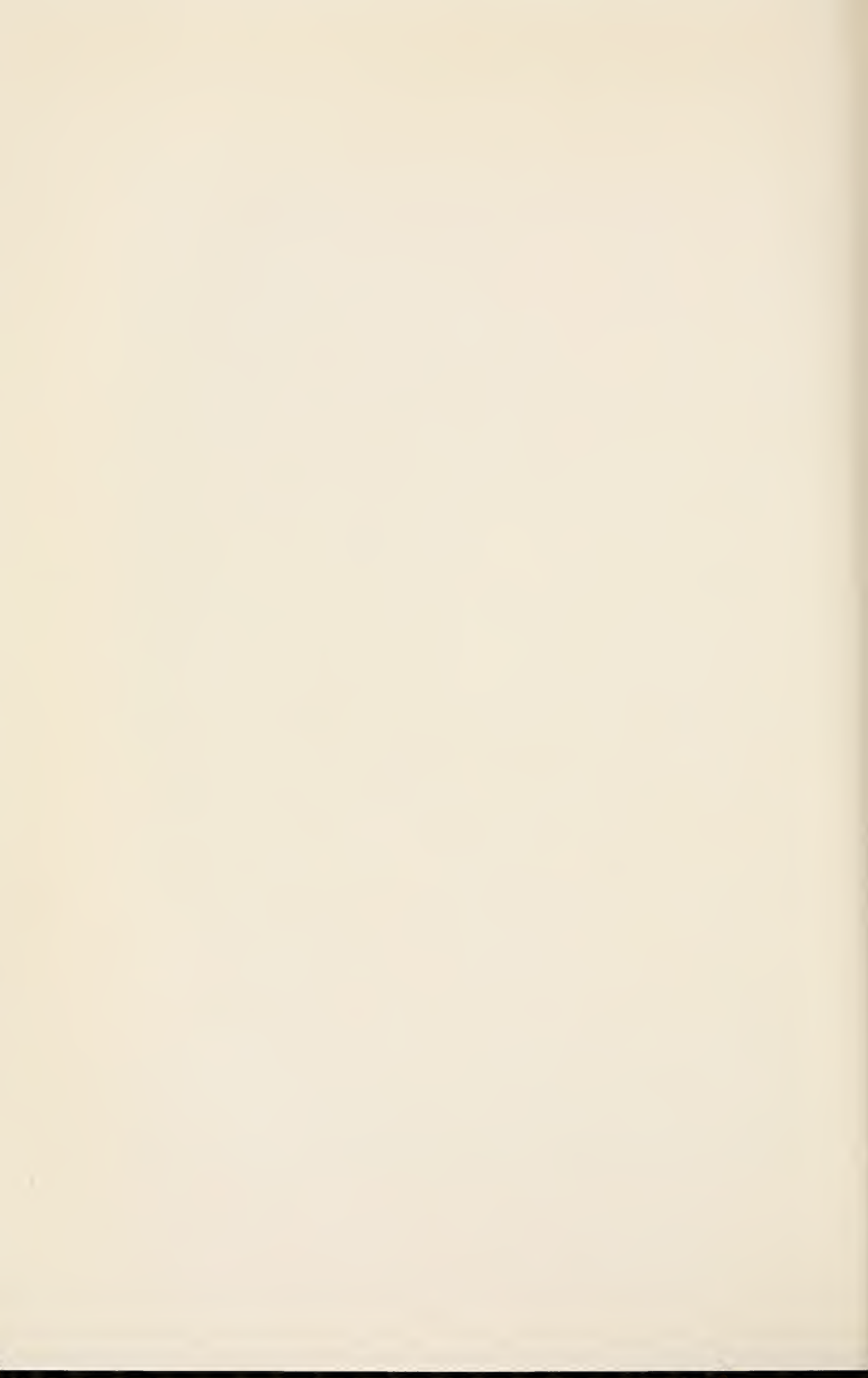
*S*TANDING like a silhouette of desolation against the sky is the great ruin of Franchimont, and the region is filled with legend and story concerning it. The people hereabouts are if anything more superstitious than their neighbours; and while I listened with interest to their stories I had rather hard work sometimes to keep my countenance. Some of the tales are tender and wildly romantic; others, like that of the green goat, are whimsical and fantastic; but over all is a veil of truth and candour with which the narrators invest the tales. Walking northward through the wood, you come upon crucifix and shrine within rose-planted enclosures. Should you enter from the opposite direction, you find comfortable farm holdings. Then there are tall rocks, dreamless of existence amid the fastnesses of fell and forest. All about are semi-sacred spots, dear to the heart of these peasants, where perchance you may stumble upon young girls

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

praying for husbands, amid the ferns. The region is full of venerable sanctity, and the dynastic changes mount the ladder of nine long centuries. Heaven knows what blue-blooded bandits besides De la Marck and his gang herded here, but they tell me of a poor peasant farmer who pastures his cattle by the river beneath the ruins of the castle his forbears had dwelt in. Here peasants cross themselves on stormy days, vowing that they hear the tolling of bells in the deep of the rushing river. Many of these villages have the same story, and, in truth, in the troublesome times of 1799 the French did confiscate the church bells, so that in many cases the monks hid their bells in the river. Walls of glossy green verdure seemingly bar the way, but open as one advances. Valley after valley is brought into view as we travel on. Following the magic of change upon change, the valley broadens, narrows again, and hides itself from view coquettishly, only to break again to view with added beauty. Here and there a village nestles, and then beyond, in the emerald fastnesses, a crag, and then beyond it Franchimont holding court amid its vassalage of hills. At first glimpse the ruin, a rugged coronal upon the hill at the confluence of the Hoegne, is most impressive. It is hard work not to write the word "picturesque," but I should refrain. After the ascent, here is desolation indeed. The scene presents an unlooked-for change, and descends to the river in colossal crags, all naked



Young Peasant Girl



## FRANCHIMONT

of verdure in places. The climb is from solitude to solitude unfinished. The great tower is softened by the cloak of distance, but near at hand, terrible in its dismantled state, as though mighty lightning blasts had cloven it from crown to foot, hurling its fragments down into the valley. I fancy that, could one view it from an aeroplane, one might better appreciate its lines and colossal fragments. Wild and dissolute men of prey were these war lords and barons of Franchimont, and worthy of their blazonry. Dissolute sons of Franchimont, dangerous upon highway, their names bywords of reckless lawlessness unto this day. Above the ruined doorway are still the arms of Franchimont, of Bavaria (Prince Bishop Ernest, 1581), and of Aspremont-Leyden, Governor. Dating from the ninth century, it has had the same chequered career which has attended most of the Ardennes castles, and it was from this portal that "a gallant six hundred" marched to Liège in 1468 to help their countrymen against Charles the Bold and Louis IX, who were there besieged. As these heroes perished to a man, Duke Charles, enraged, burnt and sacked Franchimont, and so on—and so on—throughout the years—pillage—fire and sword—murder—and rapine—until now here is all that remains of Franchimont—a heap of ruins overgrown with ivy and emerald mosses.

"Hundreds of years ago," says one of the legends, "there dwelt here a rich and powerful knight baron,



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

whose loved consort had perished in giving birth to a girl child. Upon this girl was thenceforth centred all the Baron's care and affection. When she came to sixteen years he affianced her to the son of a neighbouring baronry, a youth known as a rollicking blade, yet virtuous withal, and so the tale begins of the Lady Alois and Lord Robert of Theux. Now there was a betrothal feast arranged in celebration of the betrothal of the Lady Alois, and there had been a great hunt arranged in the forest with which to crown it all, and it was during this hunt that the fat palfrey of Lady Alois bolted in affright at something or other, God knows what" (says the tale). And the Lady Alois all at once saw that she was alone in the great green forest and unable to check the mad speed of the horse;—saw, too, just ahead in the course of the maddened racing horse a most dangerous precipice. Now did she close her eyes and, dropping the useless reins upon the horse's neck, clasp her white hands in prayer and commend her soul to the care of the Holy Virgin. When all at once a tall, handsome young stranger sprang at the head of her palfrey, and, fairly upon the edge of the horrid precipice, caught her in his strong arms and bore her to the moss beneath a large tree, where he laid her, half fainting. He was the young Lord Robert of Theux, and when he had borne her to her castle, and she had prayed him enter, he shook his head and told her his name. When she heard the

## FRANCHIMONT

name of Theux she knew that her preserver was none other than the son of her father's enemy, Baron de Theux, and she remembered the bitter feud that existed between the two baronies. A feud without end or grace, since the dark day when her ancestor, one of the great lords of Franchimont, had been beaten in a fight, and had been hanged in chains from the tower of the castle of de Theux.

"But what of that now?" says the legend. "These hot-blooded young people had fallen in love with each other, and, of course, they met again, and yet again, 'all beneath the rose,' and times a many, too.

"Now drew nigh the day fixed for the wedding of the Lady Alois and her young neighbour, whose suit she pretended all the while to favour, such was her terror of her father. But now she was at her wit's end to find a pretext for postponing the wedding. So did she forget her duty, her father and her conscience, for she yielded to love, and gave her word to run away with her lover. So one dark night she stealthily opened the small postern gate and, seized in her lover's eager arms, she was placed upon a swift horse, before him in the saddle, and soon they vanished in the blackness of the forest. The Lady Alois just turned sixteen and young Robert, Lord of Theux. But" (says the story), "think not that no one had seen them, for her affianced was prowling about, distraught with love for Alois, who strangely treated him with coldness, and this love-

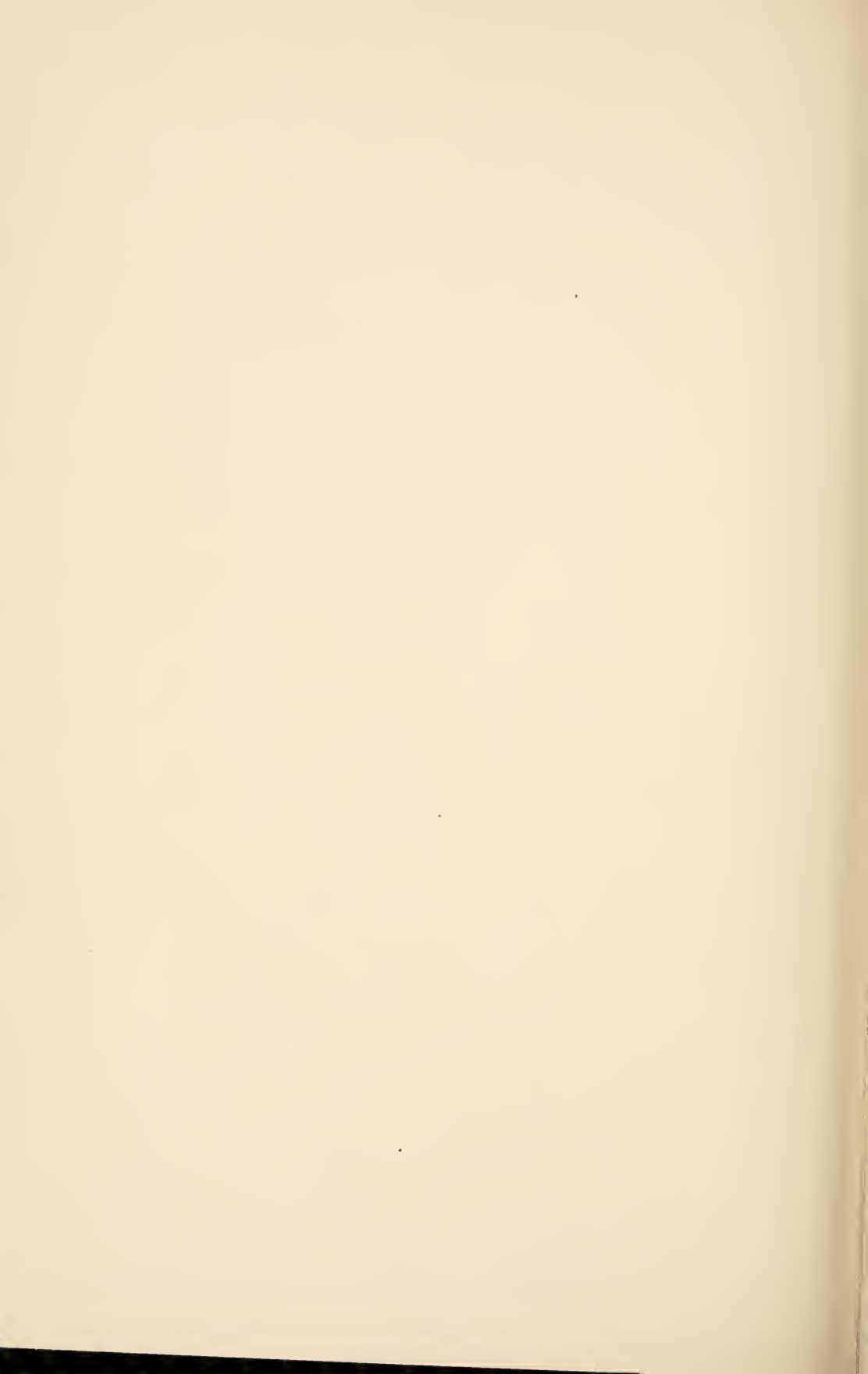
## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

sick youth was mooning upon the banks of the river, where he could see the light in Alois' chamber. He sees the two figures cloaked astride the great running horse, and, surmising some villainy afoot, alarms the watchman at the drawbridge, who arouses the Baron, and soon the household is awake and from the windows stream lights. Soon he tells his story of the fleeing figures on the horse far down the road, and in a moment armed men are in pursuit, headed by the Baron, for had he not discovered that the Lady Alois was not in her chamber? But in their haste to be gone the lovers had taken the wrong turning, and halfway to the fording place they met the pursuers, headed by the Baron, her father. There was a fierce fight, in which Alois, with her small dagger, and in the darkness not knowing whom she struck at, plunged her knife into her father's heart. The two once more escape, and after some time waiting in hiding behind the dark forest trees, they hear the men riding back towards Franchimont. Then turns Alois to her lover in thankfulness, but, to her horror, she sees not the fond face of her true love, but that of the King of Evil himself, all clad in the green flames of hell fire, who holds out his arms and grasps her to him, crying out in glee, 'Parricide! Thou'rt mine! My bride thou art!' And then" (says the legend) "a deep chasm opens before them on the banks of the Hoegne, and melting away into the rushing black, engulfing waters, they vanish. And

## FRANCHIMONT

so perished the guilty soul of the Lady Alois." Those ringing hoofbeats are still heard descending the steep mountain path in the waste of nights, and mingled with the whisper of the Hoegne waters there wells up at times the sound of sobbing; and upon a certain night of the year is to be seen flitting among these grey ruins, wringing wild hands and sprinkled with a father's blood, the woeful wraith "of a fair young girl." \*

\*See also Passmore's *In Further Ardennes*.



*The Lious Widow  
of Onhaye*





## *The Lious Widow of Onhaye*

*T*his tale was related by mine host, Alphonse Camille Winkel, of the "Gr-r-rande Hôtel de la Poste et l'Impératrice," situate beside the main road, within a stone's throw of the ferry over the Meuse, and, as the said A. C. W. was born and brought up here and showed us the very spot where it happened, I have small reason to doubt it.

Mine host told it very well, too, over coffee in the arbour, just after a good dinner. Incidentally, I may mention that he is what is called a fine figure of a man, being nearly six feet tall, with a bushy head of very fine brown hair. He is a born raconteur; also he paints pictures. I suspect that he even writes poetry.

"Widowed they say she was in the crusades. At any rate, her knight ne'er came back to her after that morn when, having confessed himself over night, he left with the first cock crow of the morning. Aye, before 'twas red in the east he did so, armed in mail, his orange-and-black surcoat fitting him and his spurs strapped on, his long two-handed sword girt well. In the shadow outside the castle the squire

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

held his shield and helmet, and here stamped his warhorse. In the chapel knelt upright his wife, haloed by two smoking, dripping candles, while the priest celebrated the mass. Thus kneeling, she remained throughout the offices, nor did she relax when her lord was communicated and anointed with the holy oil. Then he kissed her, stiffly, for his armour was upon him, and then she heard the chain mail rattle as he mounted the horse, and finally, at the head of his troop, he galloped out of the courtyard. Thus went the knight to the crusade from whence he never returned, and finally she whom he left that dark morning became known as 'The Pious Widow of Onhaye.'

"Now all this has to do with the Martyr St. Walhere, who was born at Bouvignes some time during the thirteenth century, and became so noted throughout the country for his piety and many virtues that the great lord bishop created him dean outright of Florence, which office gave him power and authority over all the ecclesiastics and clergy the country about. of Hastière, was a man of evil life, a roysterer and despoiler of maids, as well as a drunkard; so over to him one day came the good Saint Walhere, to remonstrate with him. All to no purpose, however. His gentle rebukes were disregarded, and finally Walhere bade him beware the anger from on high, and even threatened him with excommunication.

## THE MARTYR ST. WALHERE

Even this had no effect upon the Vicar, who scoffed and laughed it off, but really, as we shall see, it rankled him. The good saint took his departure, sad at heart, and went on his way to the Abbey of Hastière, but lo, when he was about to take his place in the boat to be ferried over the river, he saw that the ferryman was no other than his nephew the Vicar. Once more St. Walhere renewed his exhortations to lead a pure and holy life, whereupon the nephew struck him upon the head with the ferry pole such a blow that the good Saint fell dead. Whereupon the Vicar threw the lifeless body into the river. The body did not sink, however, as the murderer had expected and hoped it would, but was washed to the river side, where now stands the fountain. Next day some fishermen of Bouvignes found and claimed the body, in order to give it burial, but horses attached to the cart refused to move. Now came the pious widow, and, at her suggestion, two young heifers were harnessed to the cart, and she directed that they be left to choose their own path and go where they would. They at once turned aside and mounted the hillside through the tangled briars up a way so steep that no one had previously attempted it. All followed after them, and saw that they were headed towards Onhaye, but when they got to Bonair, where now stands the chapel dedicated to St. Walhere, they stopped short, but not for long, for after a rest they went on to the parish church of Onhaye, and there,

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

under the eye of the pious widow, the remains of the holy man were interred with great ceremony in the vault beneath the chancel."

Mine host vows that the tracks made by the heifers and the cart up the steep rocks may still be seen, but we did not seek to verify his tale. One should not enquire too deeply into these tales, but take them in all their embroidery for truth, particularly when told by a poet, and painter, like mine host of the "Gr-r-rande Hôtel de la Poste et l'Impératrice," over a good cup of black coffee, at the end of the day, in this pretty hill-embosomed village, when evening is drawing on and the stars, like altar tapers, are lighting one by one. The moon has just shimmered into sight, a crystal disc of that peculiar tint which has in heaven or earth no name. There is a large mystic peace of well being; the sweet charm of a village at even-tide broods on the air. God's goodness is in the breath of the woods. A score or so of chattering girls have come out to walk along the road, as is the custom here at nightfall. Soon they pass out of sight. Evidently the young men have met them, for we hear them singing together a pretty song with a sweet refrain.

*And So Adieu!*



## And So Adieu!

DINANT may be said to be *sui generis*, the very *Ocellus* of towns. It has so much distinctive individuality that, knowing it, one returns to it instinctively, just as to one's home. Warmth and colour both dwell here, and even on one of those warm rainy days, when everything is dripping with moisture, there is little "tincture of dreariness." Dinant, straddling the Meuse with its famous iron bridge, the pride of the townsfolk, is full of quaint beauty, with little of austerity. The tall, greyish-yellow, vine-clad cliff, topped with the venerable fortress ruin, is like the prow of some viking ship cleaving the green of the woods beneath and over-riding the town, which lies flatly along the river bank, and the fair flowered gardens 'broidering the deep valley. Here are warm shelter from the cold world beyond, gentle breezes and golden sunlight.

There is always a veil of bluish violet smoke arising like an incense offering from the steep roofs; and all these attributes, the unchanged customs of the



## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

ages, make Dinant a chalice, which ever retains the fragrant aroma of its drained and vanished mead.

The worshipper of grandiose spaces and Olympian heights will find but little to attract him in these dim winding valleys and placid streams, or the dashing tinkling brooks. The "Maya of size and distance," as Passmore has described it, is not here to be found. This small, comparatively unknown corner of Europe has given up to us some of her open secrets of Druid flamen and feudal baron, and much that concerns them is still to be written. The search for these "unpretending ancientries" has taken us into primitive and sleepy places and we have tasted spiritually rather than actually the fine flavours of them. The outside world has become a pigment to us in these dreamy weeks, and in this chronicle the narrator presents you to a few of the suggestive odds and ends that are found in these valleys. To us it has been well worth while.

The Lady Anne and the narrator sit silently in the vine-decked window, looking out upon the placid waters of the Meuse. The pilgrimage has been a profitable one, well worth while, and they still are loth to leave it all. This is for them the final evening at the edge of the Forest of Arden, and they are as regretful as if leaving home.

"It has been a wonderful time," breathes the Lady Anne softly; "must we really go to-morrow?" Her

## AND SO ADIEU!

glance strays again to the garden below, used by the Brothers and the Monks.

"Then you are really not sorry," asks the narrator teasingly, "that I fairly dragged you away from your sleepy little town of Courtrai, with its green dog-carts and flowered, vine-grown tower?"

The Lady Anne does not answer directly, yet her glance is eloquent. "Still, you lured me here under false pretences," she said in mock reproach. "You promised to show me Shakespeare's Arden, the Arden of *As You Like It*, and yet not a whisper have I heard of Rosalind or Orlando or the melancholy Jaques, from one end of the forest to the other."

"Listen," says the narrator, fumbling among his note-books and memoranda, "I have been expecting that reproach and so prepared for it. I jotted these notes down from the *Variorum Shakespeare*. . . H-m, . . h-m, . . Malone says, 'Ardenne is a forest of considerable extent in French Flanders, lying near the Meuse and between Charlemont and Rocroy. It is mentioned by Spenser in his *Astrophel*.'"

"Yes, but," objects Lady Anne wearily, "you said all that in the first place."

"Oh, but listen," persists the narrator, "here is something more to the purpose. Knight says, 'There are critics of another caste, who object to Shakespeare's forest of Arden, situated, as they hold, between the rivers Meuse and Moselle. They maintain that its geographical position ought to have been

## THE FOREST OF ARDEN

known to Shakespeare, and that he is most vehemently to be reprehended for imagining that a palm tree could flourish or a lioness be starving in French Flanders. We most heartily wish——"

"Look!" interrupts Lady Anne suddenly, once more turning her neck towards the window. "There is dear old Father Paul." Sure enough, there in the garden below the stalwart figure of the kindly father is slowly pacing, now appearing, now vanishing amid the tall hollyhocks and the vivid beds of stock, his head bent in prayer, his hands clasped behind his back, his rusty surplice dapping in the light breeze. As he turns, he looks up at the window. The sun is behind the high headland, and the evening air is full of fragrance. The good Father Paul waves his hand and bows low to the Lady Anne, then he turns and disappears through the old green door at the end of the garden.

As if to make amends for her inattention, the Lady Anne now turns and peers over the narrator's shoulder with a semblance of interest. "Oh, but listen to this," she says. "There are tiny places in England where, with *A Few Little P.* in hand, one might linger 'from noon till dewy eve' and say 'Ay, now am I in Arden!' Fifty places in England, forsooth! Didn't I tell you that you brought me to Flanders under false pretences?"

"Will you listen for a moment to Victor Hugo?" rejoins the narrator patiently. "Do you perceive at the

## AND SO ADIEU!

end of that clearing that profound forest whose melancholy tree-tops are gilded by autumn? It is the Forest of Arden, but make no mistake, it is not the historic forest through which the Meuse leads the delighted tourist. . . The forest to which the poet conducts us has no itinerary, no road-map mentions it, no geographer has penetrated it; it is the virgin forest of the Muse of poetry.' "

Lady Anne's eyes suddenly kindle and her face glows softly: "Why, that," says she, "is our own Forest of Arden, after all. We, too, have wandered, careless of itinerary, and of road-maps, scornful of geographers and guide-books, roaming at random amongst these blessed hills and peaceful valleys, whithersoever the spirit of legend and poetry and romance beckoned us. And that," she adds, with sudden divination, "is the only way ever really to see the Forest of Arden."

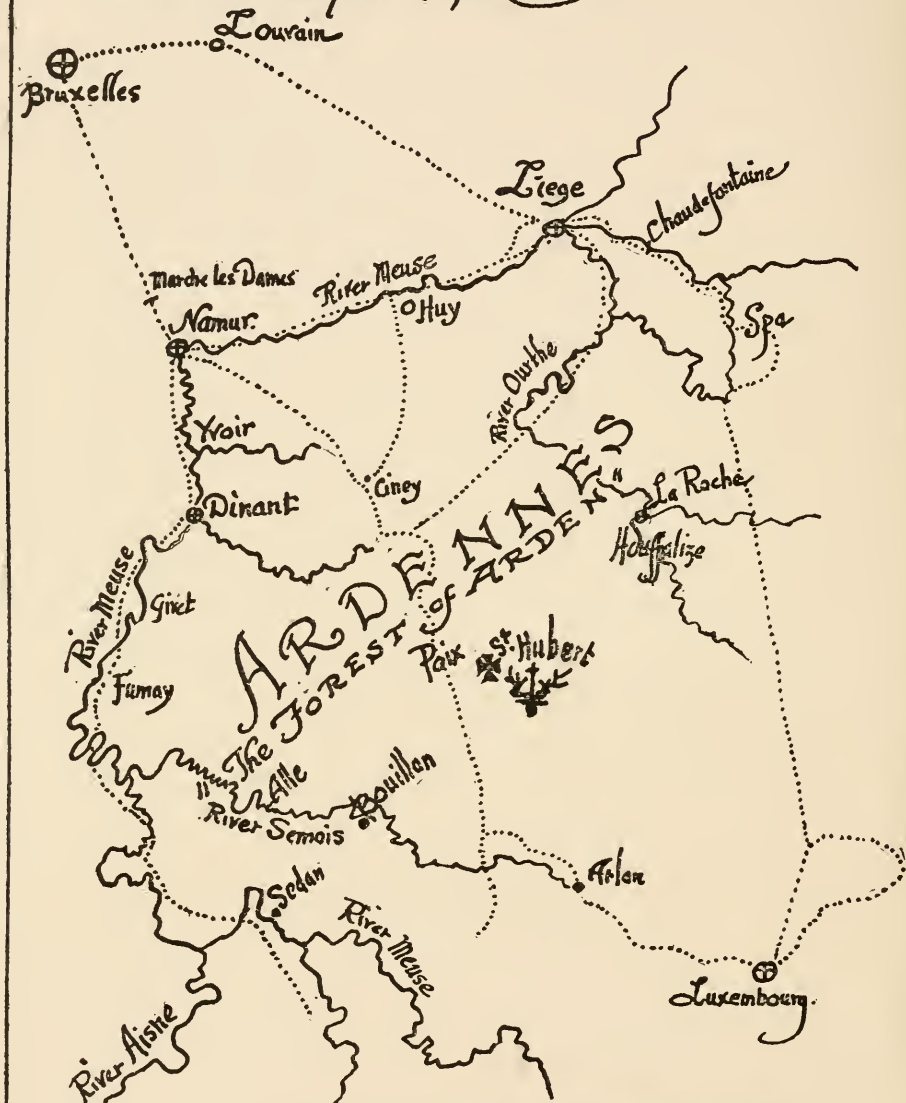
"Amen," echoes the narrator devoutly. And here the travellers bid their friend the reader a reluctant yet appreciative adieu.

*The End*

The dotted lines show Railways

Kilometres

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 (Approximately)



Roughly Sketched Map by the Author.

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FOR THOSE who wish to study the matter seriously, these authorities are cited in connection with the Legends and Fables of the Forest of Arden.

Ancient manuscripts dealing with the Ardennes variously styled the region as Ardenmarche and Ardenmar and further indiscriminately called the heroes of the Legends "l'Ardenois." The later writers corrupted this into Dane marche and Danois. Barrois, editor of the oldest versions, confirms this in the translations of the two manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and called the region "Tierris d'Ardane."

See Ward, cat. I, pp. 604-6 and also cat. I, p. 628 on the manuscript (Royal, 15 E., VI) of Simon de Ponille, wherein Thierry of Ardenne is in one place called "le dannois," instead of "l'Ardennois."

See "Les Enfances d'Ogier le Danois," written by Adenez, Herald to Henry III, duke of Brabant.

"Le Rommant nôme Ogier le Dannois." A. Verard, Paris. *Circa*, 1498.

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Also P. Lacroix, manuscript Ital., p. 163.



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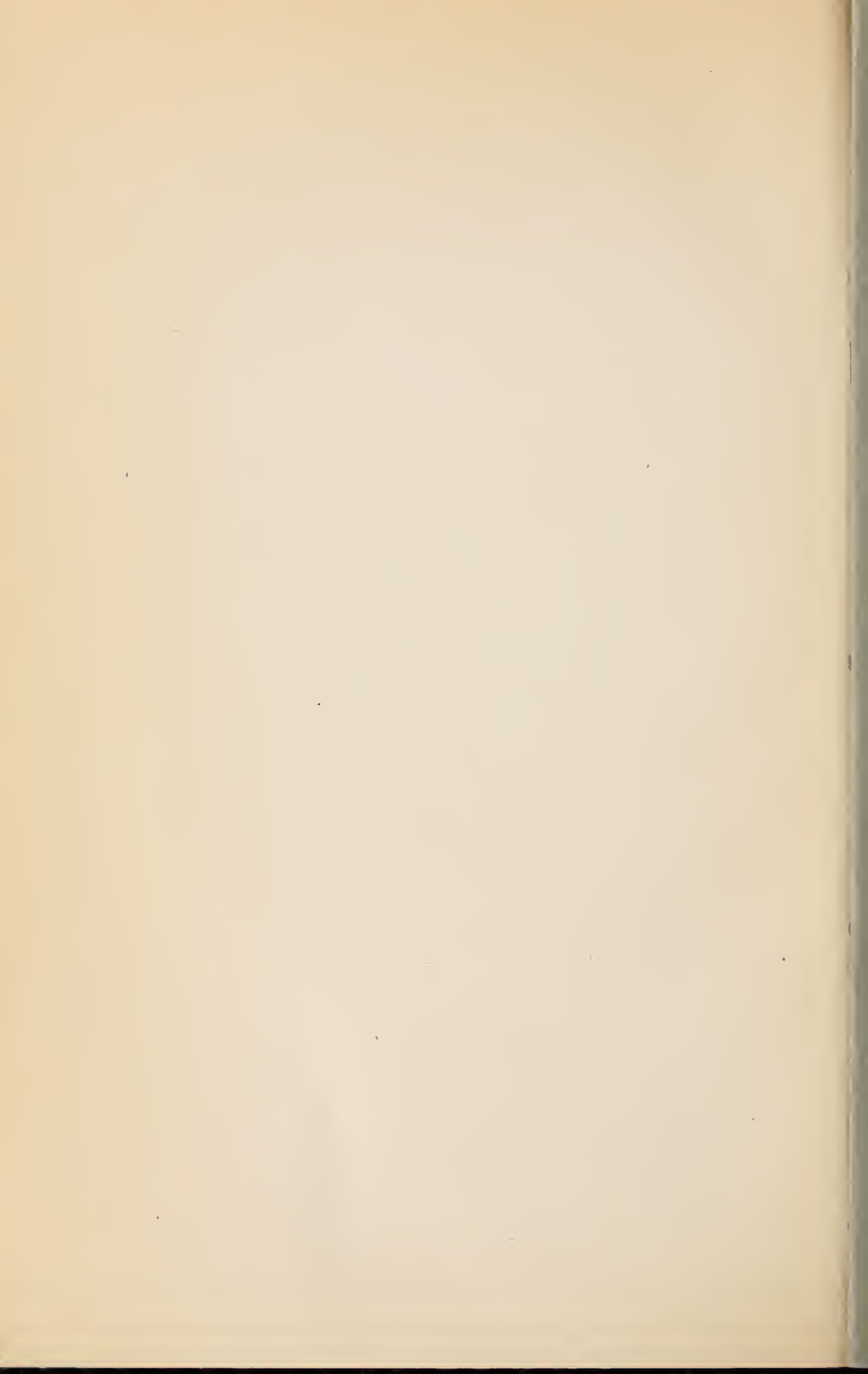
See also Dunlop's "History of Fiction," Vol. I, p. 330.

"The Four Sons of Aymon." ("Quatre Fils Aymon." Paris 1525 folio.)

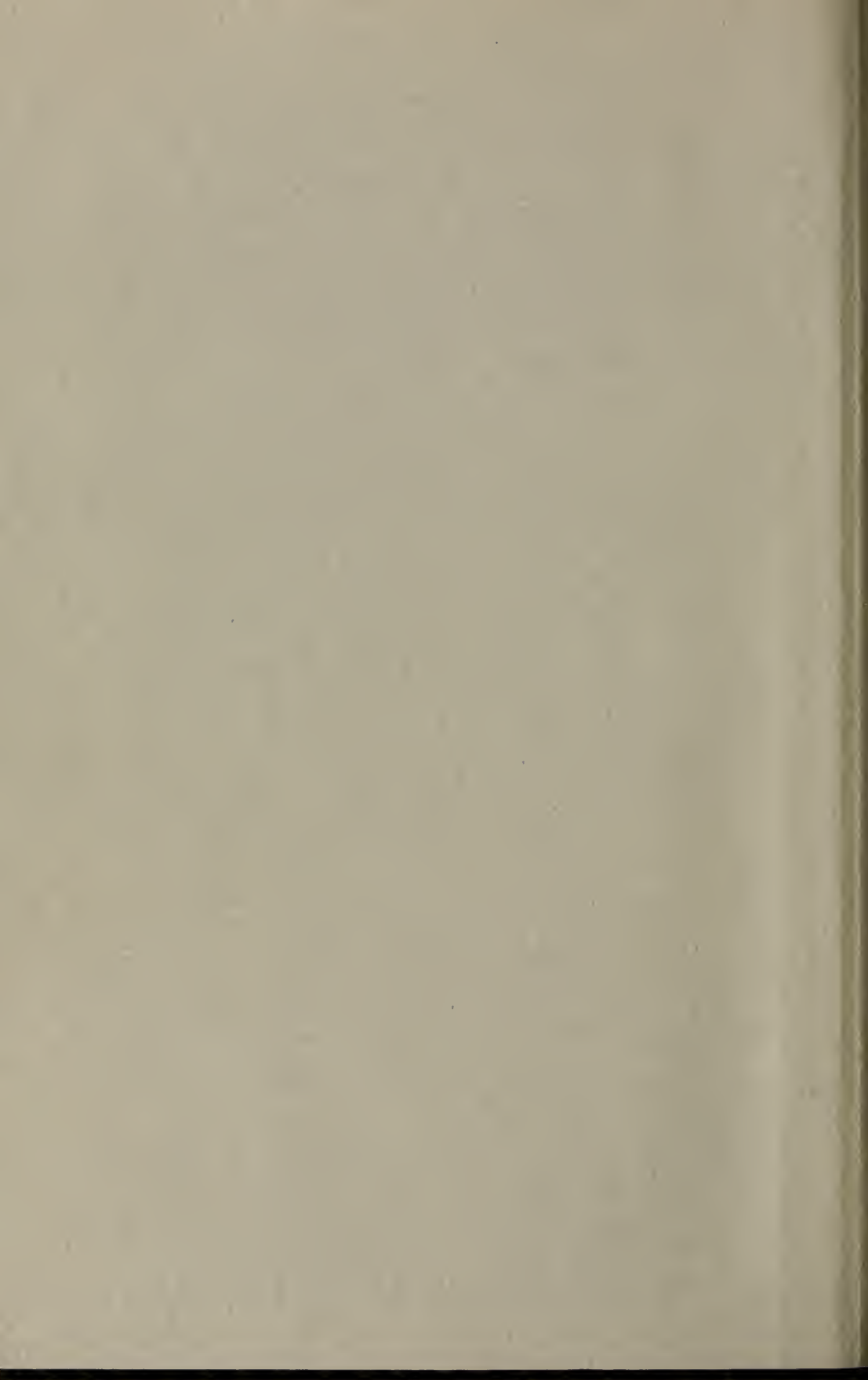
"Lodge's 'Rosalynd,' " says Dunlop's "History of Fiction," p. 554, "in its turn has suggested almost the whole plot of 'As You Like It,' wherein the scenes are located in the Forest of Arden in the Ardennes."











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